

AN *3.1.1*
E S S A Y
ON THE
G E N I U S
AND
W R I T I N G S
OF
P O P E. *R*

VOLUME THE SECOND.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY, IN PALL-MALL.

M.DCC.LXXXIII. *6*



ADVERTISEMENT.

IN order to account for the anachronisms that appear in this essay, it is necessary and respectful to inform the reader, that this volume was printed, as far as the 201st page, above twenty years ago. The author begs leave to add, that he flatters himself, that no observations in this work can be so perversely misinterpreted and tortured, as to make him insinuate, contrary to his opinion and inclination, that POPE was not a *great* poet: he only says and thinks, he was not the *greatest*. He imagined his meaning would have been perceived, and his motives for composing this essay would have been clearly known, from the passage of Quintilian, prefixed to the first volume of it; which passage implies, that as there were readers at Rome,

ii ADVERTISEMENT.

who inverted the order of poetical excellence, and who preferred Lucilius to Virgil; so there might be readers in England, so devoted to POPE, as to prefer him to Milton; and the author thought and knew there were actually many such readers and judges; who seemed not to recollect, that, in every language, he is the truest and most genuine poet, whose works most powerfully strike the imagination with what is Great, Beautiful, and New.

A N
E S S A Y
ON THE
WRITINGS and GENIUS
O F
P O P E.

S E C T. VII.

Of the TEMPLE *of* FAME.

FEW disquisitions are more amusing, or perhaps more instructive, than those which relate to the rise and gradual increase of literature in any kingdom: And among the various species of literature, the origin and progress of poetry, however shallow reasoners may despise it, is a subject of no small utility. For the manners and customs,

Vol. II.

B

toms,

2 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

toms, the different ways of thinking and of living, the favorite passions, pursuits, and pleasures of men, appear in no writings so strongly marked, as in the works of the poets in their respective ages; so that in these compositions, the historian, the moralist, the politician, and the philosopher, may, each of them, meet with abundant matter for reflection and observation.

POETRY made it's first appearance in Britain, as perhaps in most other countries, in the form of chronicles, intended to perpetuate the deeds both of civil and military heroes, but mostly the latter. Of this species is the chronicle of Robert of Glocester; and of this species also was the song, or ode, which William the Conqueror, and his followers, sung at their landing in this kingdom from Normandy. The mention of which event, will naturally remind us of the check it gave to the native strains of the old British poetry, by an introduction of foreign manners, customs, images, and language.

language. These ancient strains were, however, sufficiently harsh, dry, and uncouth. And it was to the *Italians* we owed any thing that could be called poetry: from whom Chaucer copied largely, as *they* are said to have done from the bards of Provence; and to which Italians he is perpetually owing his obligations, particularly to Boccace and Petrarch. But Petrarch had great advantages, which Chaucer wanted, not only in the friendship and advice of Boccace, but still more in having found such a predecessor as Dante. In the year 1359, Boccace sent to Petrarch a copy of Dante, whom he called his father, written with his own hand. And it is remarkable, that he accompanied his present with an apology for sending this poem to Petrarch, who, it seems, was jealous of Dante, and in the answer speaks coldly of his merits. This circumstance, unobserved by the generality of writers, and even by Fontanini, Crescimbini, and Muratori, is brought forward and related at large, in the third volume, page 507, of the very entertaining

4 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Memoirs of the life of Petrarch. In the year 1363, Boccace, driven from Florence by the plague, visited Petrarch at Venice, and carried with him Leontius Pilatus, of Thessalonica, a man of genius, but of haughty, rough, and brutal manners; from this singular man, who perished in a voyage from Constantinople to Venice, 1365, Petrarch received a Latin translation of the Iliad and Odyssey. Muratori, in his 1. book, Della Perfetta Poesia, p. 18, relates, that a very few years after the death of Dante, 1321, a most curious work on the Italian poetry, was written by a M. A. di Tempo, of which he had seen a manuscript in the great library at Milan, of the year 1332, and of which this is the title: Incipit Summa *Artis Ritmici vulgaris dictaminis*. *Ritmorum vulgarium* septem sunt genera. 1. Est Sonetus. 2. Ballata. 3. Cantio extensa. 4. Rotundellus. 5. Mandrialis. 6. Serventesius. 7. Motus confectus. But whatever Chaucer might copy from the Italians, yet the artful and entertaining plan of his Canterbury Tales,

was purely original and his own. This admirable piece, even exclusive of it's poetry, is highly valuable, as it preserves to us the liveliest and exactest picture of the manners, customs, characters, and habits of our forefathers, whom he has brought before our eyes acting as on a stage, suitably to their different orders and employments. With these portraits the driest antiquary must be delighted; by this plan, he has more judiciously connected these stories which the guests relate, than Boccace has done his novels: whom he has imitated, if not excelled, in the variety of the subjects of his tales. It is a common mistake, that Chaucer's excellence lay in this manner of treating light and ridiculous subjects; but whoever will attentively consider the noble poem of Palamon and Arcite, will be convinced that he equally excels in the pathetic and the sublime. It would be matter of curiosity to know with certainty, who was the first author of this interesting tale. It is plain, by a passage in Boccace, that it was in being before his time. It
has

6 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

has been by some ascribed to a writer almost unknown, called Alanus de Insulis. I have lately met with an elegy in Joannes Secundus occasioned by this Story; it is in his third book, and is thus intitled: * “ In Historiam de rebus a Theseo gestis duorumque rivalium certamine, Gallicis numeris ab illustri quadam Matrona suavissime conscriptam.” Perhaps this compliment was addressed to Madam de Scudery, who is said to have translated Chaucer into modern French. Among other instances of vanity, the French are perpetually boasting, that they have been our masters in many of the polite arts, and made earlier improvements in literature. But it may be asked, what cotemporary poet can they name to stand in competition with Chaucer? In carefully examining the curious work of the president Fauchet, on the characters of the ancient French poets, I can find none of this age, but barren chroniclers, and harsh romancers in rhyme, without the elegance, elevation, invention, or harmony of Chaucer.

* Eleg. 15:

Pasquiere

Pasquiere informs us, that it was about the time of Charles VI. 1380, that les chants royaux, balades, rondeaux, and pastorales, began to be in vogue; but these compositions are low and feeble, in comparison of the venerable English bard. Froissart the valuable historian, about the same time wrote very indifferent verses. Charles of Orleans, father of Lewis XII. left a manuscript of his poems. At his death Francis Villon was thirty-three years old; and John Marot, the father of Clement, was then born. According to Boileau, whose testimony should be regarded, Villon was the first who gave any form and order to the French poetry.

Villon sceut le premier, dans ces siecles grossieus,
D'ebrouïller l'art confus de nos vieux Romanciers*.

But Villon was merely a pert and insipid ballad-monger, whose thoughts and diction were as low and illiberal, as his life.

THE HOUSE OF FAME, as Chaucer entitled his piece, gave the hint of the poem before

* L' Art Poet. chan. i.

8 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

us, though the design is in truth improved and heightened by the masterly hand of POPE. It is not improbable, that this subject was suggested to our author, not only by Dryden's translations of Chaucer, of which POPE was so fond, but likewise, by that celebrated paper of Addison, in the Tatler, called the Tables of Fame, to which the great worthies of antiquity are introduced, and seated according to their respective merits and characters ; and which was published some years before this poem was written. Chaucer himself borrowed his description from Ovid, in the beginning of the twelfth book of his Metamorphoses, from whence he has closely copied the situation and formation of the edifice.

Orbe locus medio est inter terrasque fretumque,
Cœlestesque plagas, triplicis confinia mundi,
Unde quod est usquam, quamvis regionibus absit,
Inspicitur, penetratque cavas vox omnis ad aures*.

Ovid has introduced some allegorical personages, but has not distinguished them with any picturesque epithets ;

Illic

* Ver. 40.

AND GENIUS OF POPE.

Illic CREDULITAS, illic temerarius ERROR,
Vanaque LÆTITIA est, consternatique TIMORES,
SEDITIONQUE recens, dubioque auctore SUSURRI*.

Dryden translated this passage of Ovid;
and POPE, who evidently formed himself
upon Dryden, could not but have frequently
read it with pleasure, particularly the follow-
ing harmonious lines.

'Tis built of brass, the better to diffuse
The spreading sounds, and multiply the News;
Where echos in repeated echos play:
A mart for ever full, and open night and day.
Nor silence is within, nor voice express,
But a deaf noise of sounds that never cease,
† Confus'd, and chiding, like the hollow roar
Of tides, receding from th' insulted shore:
Or like the broken thunder, heard from far,
When Jove to distance drives the rolling war.

* Ver. 63.

† Confus'd, &c.

This is more poetically expressed than the same image in
our author.

Sudden I heard a wild promiscuous sound,
Like broken thunders that at distance roar,
Or billows murm'ring on the hollow shore.

Dryden's lines are superior to the original.

Qualia de pelagi, si quis procul audiat, undis

140 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

IT is time to proceed to some remarks on particular passages of this Vision; which I shall do in the order in which they occur, not censuring or commending any, without a reason assigned.

1. Nor was the work impair'd by storms alone,
But felt th' approaches of too warm a sun;
For fame, impatient of extremes, decays
Not more by envy, than excess of praise.

Does not this use of the heat of the sun, appear to be a puerile, and far-fetched conceit? What connection is there betwixt the two sorts of excesses here mentioned? My purpose in animadverting so frequently, as I have done, on this species of false thoughts, is to guard the reader, especially of the younger sort, from being betrayed by the authority of so correct a writer as POPE, into such specious and false ornaments of style. For the same reason, the opposition of ideas in the three

*Esse solent, qualemve sonum, cum Jupiter atras
Increpuit nubes, extrema tonitrua reddunt.*

B. xii. V. 57.

In this passage of Dryden are many instances of the alliteration, which he has managed beautifully.

last

last words of the following line, may be condemned.

And legislators seem to think in stone*.

2. So Zembla's rocks, the beauteous work of frost,
Rise white in air, and glitter o'er the coast,
Pale suns, unfelt, at distance roll away,
And on th' impassive ice the light'nings play;
Eternal snows the growing mass supply,
Till the bright mountains prop th' incumbent sky;
As Atlas fix'd each hoary pile appears,
The gather'd Winter of a thousand years †.

A REAL lover of painting, will not be contented with a single view and examination of this beautiful ‡ winter-piece, but will return to it again and again, with fresh delight. The images are distinct, and the epithets lively and appropriated, especially the words, *pale, unfelt, impassive, incumbent, gathered.*

3. There great Alcides, stooping with his toil,
Refts on his club, and holds th' Hesperian spoil §.

* Ver. 74.

† Ver. 52.

‡ The reader may consult Thomson's WINTER, v. 905.

§ Ver. 81.

12 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

It were to be wished, that our author, whose knowledge and taste of the fine arts were unquestionable, had taken more pains in describing so famous a statue as that of the Farnesian Hercules, to which he plainly refers; for he has omitted the characteristical excellencies of this famous piece of Grecian workmanship, namely, the uncommon breadth of the shoulders, the knottyness and spaciousness of the * chest, the firmness and protuberance of the muscles in each limb, particularly the legs, and the majestic vastness of the whole figure, undoubtedly designed by the artist to give a full idea of STRENGTH, as the Venus de Medicis of BEAUTY. These were the “*invicti membra Glyconis*,” which, it is probable, Horace proverbially alluded to in his first epistle †. The name of Glycon is to this day preserved on the base of the figure, as the maker of it; and as the virtuosi, customarily in speaking of a picture, or

* *Luxuriatque toris animosum pectus.* — — —

Virg. Georg. lib. iii. ver. 81.

† Ver. 30.

statue,

statue, call it their RAPHAEL or BERNINI, why should not Horace, in common speech, use the name of the workman, instead of the work? To mention the Hesperian apples, which the artist flung backwards, and almost concealed as an inconsiderable object, and which therefore scarcely appear in the statue, was below the notice of POPE.

4. Amphion there the loud creating lyre
Strikes, and beholds a sudden Thebes aspire.
Cythæron's echos answer to his call,
And half the mountain rolls into a wall:
There might you see the lengthening spires ascend,
The domes swell up, the widening arches bend,
The growing tow'rs like exhalations rise,
And the huge columns heave into the skies*.

It may be imagined, that these expressions are too bold; and a phlegmatic critic might ask, how it was possible to see, in sculpture, Arches *bending*, and Towers *growing*? But the best writers, in speaking of pieces of painting and sculpture, use the present tense, and

* Ver. 85.

14 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

talk of the thing as really doing, to give a force to the description. Thus Virgil,

—— Gallos in limine adesse canebat *.

— Incedunt victæ longo ordine gentes,
Quam variæ linguis, habitu tam vestis et armis †.

As Pliny says, that, Clefiochus painted,
“ Jovem muliebriter ingemiscentem.” And
Homer, in his beautiful and lively descrip-
tion of the shield ;

— — — — — εν δ' αρα τοισιν
Αυλοι φορμιγγες τε βονη εχον ‡.

And again,

Μυκηθμων δ' απο κοπρη επιστευοντο νομον δε,
Παρ ποταμον κελαδοινα §.

In another place,

— — — — — Λινον υπο καλον αιιδε ||.

Upon which Clarke has made an observation
that surprises me : “ sed quomodo in scuto
DEPINGI potuit, quem CANERET citharista?”

* Lib. viii. v. 656. † Lib. viii. v. 656. ‡ Iliad,
lib. xviii. v. 494. § Ven. 575. || Ver. 570.

THIS

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 15

THIS passage must not be parted with, till we have observed the artful rest upon the first syllable of the second verse,

Amphion there the loud creating lyre
Strikes |.

THERE are many instances of such judicious pauses in Homer.

Αῦλας ἐπεὶ αὐλοῖσι βίλος ἐχέπαικας ἐφίησ
Βαλλ'*. — — — —

As likewise in the great imitator of Homer, who always accommodates the sound to the sense,

And over them triumphant death his dart
Shook †. — — — —

— — — — Others on the grafs
Couch'd ‡. — — — —

And of his blindness,

— — — — But not to me returns
Day! — — — —

* Lib. i. v. 51.

† Milton, b. ii. v. 491.

‡ B. iv. v. 356.

16 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

In the spirited speech of Satan,

— — — — All good to me becomes
Bane *. — — — —

These monosyllables have much force and energy. The Latin language does not admit of such. Virgil therefore, who so well understood and copied all the secret arts and charms of Homer's versification, has afforded us no examples; yet, some of his pauses on words of more syllables are emphatical,

Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes,
Ingens †. — — — —

— — — — Hærent infixi pectore vultus
Verbaque ‡. — — — —

Sola domo mæret vacua, stratisque relictis
Incubat §. — — — —

— — — — Pecudesque locutæ,
Infandum ||! — — — —

5. These stopp'd the moon, and call'd th'unbody'd shades
To midnight banquets in the glimm'ring glades;

* Book ix. v. 122. † Georg. i. v. 476. ‡ Æn. iv. v. 4.
§ Æn. iv. v. 82. || Georg. i. v. 478.

Made visionary fabrics round them rise,
 And airy spectres skim before their eyes;
 Of Talismans and Sigils knew the pow'r,
 And careful watch'd the planetary hour *.

THESE superstitions of the East, are highly striking to the imagination. Since the time that poetry has been forced to assume a more sober, and perhaps a more rational air, it scarcely ventures to enter these fairy regions. There are some however, who think it has suffered by deserting these fields of fancy, and by totally laying aside the descriptions of magic and enchantment. What an exquisite picture has Thomson given us in his CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid isles,
 Plac'd far amid the melancholy Main,
 (Whether it be lone fancy him beguiles,
 Or that aerial beings sometimes deign
 To stand, embodied, to our senses plain)
 Sees on the naked hill or valley low,
 The whilst in ocean Phœbus dips his wain,
 A vast assembly moving to and fro,
 Then all at once in air dissolves the wonderous show †.

* Ver. 101.

† Castle of Indolence, Stan. 30. B. 1.

18 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

I cannot at present recollect any solitude so romantic, or peopled with beings so proper to the place, and the spectator. The mind naturally loves to lose itself in one of these wildernesses, and to forget the hurry, the noise, and splendor of more polished life.

6. But on the South, a long majestic race
Of Ægypt's priests the gilded niches grace *.

I WISH POPE had enlarged on the rites and ceremonies of these Ægyptian priests, a subject finely suited to descriptive poetry. Milton has touched some of them finely, in an ode not sufficiently attended to.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshower'd grass with lowings loud :
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest,
Nought but profoundest hell can be his shroud ;
In vain with timbrel'd anthems dark,
The fable-stoed forcerers bear his worship'd ark †.

* Ver. 109.

† Milton's Poems, Vol. II. Pag. 30. Newton's Edit. Oct.

7. High

7. High on his car Sesostris struck my view,
 Whom sceptred slaves in golden harness drew,
 His hands a bow and pointed jav'lin hold;
 His giant arms are arm'd in scales of gold*.

THIS colossal statue of the celebrated Eastern tyrant is strongly imagined. As Phidias is said to have received his ideas of majesty in his famous Jupiter, from a passage in Homer, so, it is not impossible but our author's imagination was inflamed and enlarged by Milton's picture of Satan. It is well known, that the Ægyptians, in all their productions of art, mistook the gigantic for the sublime, and greatness of bulk for greatness of manner.

8. Of Gothic structure was the Northern side,
 O'erwrought with ornaments of barb'rous pride †.

“THOSE who have considered the theory of Architecture, tell us the proportions of the three Grecian orders, were taken from the Human Body, as the most beautiful and perfect production of nature. Hence were de-

* Ver. 113.

† Ver. 119.

20 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

rived those graceful ideas of columns, which had a character of strength without clumsiness, and of delicacy without weakness. Those beautiful proportions were, I say, taken originally from nature, which, in her creatures, as hath been already observed, referreth to some use, end or design. The Gonfiezza also, or swelling, and the diminution of a pillar, is it not in such proportion as to make it appear strong and light at the same time? In the same manner, must not the whole entablature, with its projections, be so proportioned, as to seem great, but not heavy; light, but not little; inasmuch as a deviation into either extreme, would thwart that reason and use of things, wherein their beauty is founded, and to which it is subordinate? The entablature and all its parts and ornaments, architrave, freeze, cornice, triglyphs, metopes, modiglions, and the rest, have each an use, or appearance of use, in giving firmness and union to the building, in protecting it from the weather, in casting off the rain, in representing the ends of the beams with their intervals,

intervals, the production of the rafters, and so forth. And if we consider the graceful angles in frontispieces, the spaces between the columns, or the ornaments of the capitals, shall we not find that their beauty ariseth from the appearance of use, or the imitation of natural things, whose beauty is originally founded on the same principle? Which is indeed, the grand distinction between Grecian and Gothic architecture, the latter being fantastical and for the most part founded neither in nature nor reason, in necessity nor use, the appearance of which, accounts for all the beauties, graces, and ornaments of the other.*"

9. There sat Zamolxis with erected Eyes,
And Odin here in mimic trances dies.
There on rude iron columns, smear'd with blood,
The horrid forms of Scythian heroes stood,
Druids and bards (their once loud harps unstrung)
And youths that died to be by poets sung †.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE, always a pleasing, though not a solid writer, relates the follow-

* ALCIPHON, Vol. I. Dial. III.

† Ver. 123.

ing

22 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

ing anecdote.—“ In discourse upon this subject, and confirmation of this opinion, having been general among the Goths of those countries, count Oxenstiern the Swedish ambassador, told me, there was still in Sweden, a place which was a memorial of it, and was called Odin’s hall : that it was a great bay in the sea, encompassed on three sides with steep and ragged rocks ; and that in the time of the Gothic paganism, men that were either sick of diseases they esteemed mortal or incurable, or else grown invalid with age, and thereby past all military action, and fearing to die meanly and basely, as they esteemed it, in their beds, they usually caused themselves to be brought to the nearest part of these rocks, and from thence threw themselves down into the sea, hoping by the boldness of such a violent death, to renew the pretence of admision into the hall of Odin, which they had lost by failing to die in combat, and by arms *.”

* Temple’s Works, Vol. III, pag. 238.

IN these beautiful verses we must admire the postures of Zamolxis and Odin, which exactly point out the characters of these famous legislators, and instructors, of the Northern nations.

As expressive, and as much in character, are the figures of the old heroes, druids and bards, which are represented as standing on iron pillars of barbarous workmanship: they remind one of that group of personages, which Virgil, a lover of antiquity, as every real poet must be, has judiciously placed before the palace of Latinus.

Quinetiam veterum effigies ex ordine avorum,
Antiqua e cedro, Italusque, paterque Sabinus
Vitifator, curvam servans sub imagine falcem;
Saturnusque senex, Janique bifrontis imago,
Vestibulo astabant *.—

CONSIDER also the description of Evander's court, and the picture of ancient manners it affords, one of the most striking parts of the

* Ver. 177. Æn. l. 7.

24 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Æneid. The mind delights to be carried backward into those primitive times when

— — — *Paffimque armenta videbant
Romanoque foro & lautis mugire carinis.*

And the view of those places and buildings in their first rude and artless state, which became afterwards so magnificent and celebrated, forms an amusing contrast.

*Hinc ad Tarpeiam sedem, & Capitolia ducit
AUREA nunc, olim sylvestribus HORRIDA dumis *.*

I HAVE frequently wondered that our modern writers have made so little use of the druidical times, and the traditions of the old bards, which afford subjects fruitful of the most genuine poetry, with respect both to imagery and sentiment. Mr. Gray however has made amends by his last noble ode on the expulsion of the bards from Wales.

Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hush'd the stormy main :
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed :

* *Æn.* VIII. 346.

Mountains,

Mountains, ye mourn in vain
 Modred, whose magic Song
 Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-top'd head.
 On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
 Smear'd with gore, and ghastly pale !
 Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail ;
 The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by *.

THE ancients constantly availed themselves of the mention of particular mountains, rivers, and other objects of nature ; and indeed almost confine themselves to the tales and traditions of their respective countries : whereas we have been strangely neglectful in celebrating our own SEVERN, THAMES, or MALVERN, and have therefore fallen into trite repetitions of classical images, as well as classical names. Our muses have seldom been

— — — — playing on the steep
 Where our old bards, the famous Druids, lie †,

* Dodfley's Miscellanies, Vol. VI. p. 327.

† Supposed to be a place in the mountains of Denbighshire, called *Druids stones*, because of the many stone chests and coffins found there.

26 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard stream *.

Milton, we see, was sensible of the force of such imagery, as we may gather from this short, but exquisite passage; and so were Drayton and Spenser. What pictures would a writer of the fancy of Theocritus, have drawn from the scenes and stories of the isle of Anglesey!

Yet still enamour'd of their ancient haunts,
Unseen of mortal eyes, they hover round
Their ruin'd altars, consecrated hills
Once girt with spreading oaks, mysterious rows
Of rude enormous obelisks, that rise
Orb within orb, stupendous monuments
Of artless architecture, such as now
Oft-times amaze the wandering traveller,
By the pale moon discern'd on Sarum's plain †.

I CANNOT conclude this article without inserting two stanzas of an old Runic *ode* ‡ preserved by Olaus Wormius, containing the

* Lycidas, Ver. 55.

† See a fine dramatic poem, by Mr. West, entitled *The Institution of the Order of the Garter*.

‡ Cited in Dr. Hickes's *Thesaurus*.

dying

dying words of Ludbrog, who reigned in the north above eight hundred years ago, and who is supposed to be just expiring by the mortal bite of a serpent.

XXV.

Pugnavimus ensibus.
Hoc ridere me facit semper,
Quod Balderi Patris Scamna,
Parata scio in aula.
Bibemus cerevisiam
Ex concavis crateribus craniorum.
Non gemit vir fortis contra mortem !
Magnifici in Odini domibus,
Non venio desperabundus,
Verbis ad Odini aulam.

XXIX.

Fert animus finire :
Invitant me Dylfæ,
Quas ex Odini aula
Odinus mihi misit.
Lætus cerevisiam, cum Afis,
In summa sede bibam.
Vitæ elapsæ sunt horæ !
Ridens moriar !

THESE stanzas breathe the true spirit of a barbarous old warrior. The abruptness and brevity of the sentences are much in character,

ter ; as is the noble disdain of life expressed by the two last words ; *Ridens moriar*. To this brave and valiant people is mankind indebted for one of the most useful deliverances it ever received ; I mean, the destruction of the universal empire of Rome. The great prerogative of Scandinavia, and which ought to place the nations which inhabit it, above all the people of the world, is, that this country has been the resource of the liberty of Europe ; that is to say, of almost all the liberty that is to be found among men. Jornandes the Goth, has called the North of Europe the magazine or work-shop of human kind : I should rather call it the magazine of those instruments which broke in pieces the chains, which were forged in the South. There those heroic nations were formed, who issued from their country, to destroy the tyrants and slaves of the earth, and to teach men that nature having made them equal, reason could not make them dependent, but only for the sake of their own happiness*.

* See L'Esprit de Loix, liv. XIV. and liv. XVII.

LIBERTY and courage are the offspring of the northern, and luxury and learning of the southern nations.

10. But in the centre of the hallow'd choir,
Six pompous columns o'er the rest aspire;
Around the shrine itself of FAME they stand,
Hold the chief honours, and the fane command*.

THE six persons POPE thought proper to select, as worthy to be placed on these pillars as the highest seats of honour, are HOMER, VIRGIL, PINDAR, HORACE, ARISTOTLE, TULLY †. It is observable, that our author has omitted the great dramatic poets of Greece: Sophocles and Euripides deserved certainly an honourable niche in the Temple of FAME, in preference to Pindar and Horace. But the truth is, it was not fashionable in POPE'S

* Ver. 178.

† Chaucer has mentioned Statius in this place, in a manner that suits his character.

Upon an iron pillar strong,
That painted was all endilong,
With tyger's blood in every place,
The Tholosan that hight y Stace.

time,

time, nor among his acquaintance, attentively to study these poets. By a strange fatality they have not in this kingdom, obtained the rank they deserve amongst classic writers. We have numberless treatises on Horace and Virgil, for instance, who in their different kinds do not surpass the authors in question; whilst hardly a critic among us, has professedly pointed out their excellencies. Even real scholars think it sufficient to be acquainted and touched with the beauties of Homer, Hesiod, and Callimachus, without proceeding to enquire,

— What the lofty grave tragedians taught,
 In chorus or iambic, teachers best
 Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd
 In brief sententious precepts *.

I own, I have some particular reasons for thinking that our author was not very conversant, in this sort of composition, having no inclination to the drama. In a note on the third book of his Homer, where Helen points out to Priam the names and characters of the

* Paradise Regained, b. IV. ver. 264.

Grecian leaders from the walls of Troy, he observes, that several great poets have been engaged by the beauty of this passage, to an imitation of it. But who are the poets he enumerates on this occasion? Only Statius and Tasso; the former of whom in his seventh book, and the latter in his third, shews the forces and the commanders that invested the cities, of Thebes, and Jerusalem.

* Not a syllable is mentioned of that capital scene in the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides, from the hundred and twentieth, to the two hundredth line, where the old man standing with Antigone on the walls of Thebes, marks out to her the various figures, habits, armour,

* In the dedication to the *miscellanies* he so much studied and admired, he had read the following strange words of his master Dryden, addressed to lord Radcliffe. "Though you have read the best authors in their own languages, and perfectly distinguish of their several merits, and in general prefer them to the Moderns, yet I know *you judge FOR the English tragedies AGAINST the Greek and Latin*, as well as against the French, Italian, and Spanish of these latter ages. Indeed there is a vast difference betwixt arguing like Perault in behalf of the French poets against Homer and Virgil, and betwixt giving the English poets their undoubted due of excelling Eschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles." *Miscell. III. part, Lond. 1693.*

and

32 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

and qualifications of each different warrior, in the most lively and picturesque manner, as they appear in the camp beneath them *.

11. High on the first the mighty Homer shone ;
 Eternal adamant compos'd his throne ;
 Father of verse ! in holy fillets drest,
 His silver beard wav'd gently o'er his breast ;
 Though blind, a boldness in his looks appears :
 In years he seems, but not impair'd by years †.

A STRIKING and venerable portrait ! The divine old man is represented here with suitable

* Among the rest, Euripides makes Antigone enquire, which among the warriors is her brother Polynices ; this is one of those delicate and tender strokes of nature, for which this feeling tragedian is so justly admired. When she discovers him she breaks out thus,

Στροφή 1.

Αντικειος εἶδε δρομον νεφελᾶς
 Ποσιν εξαυσσάμι δι' αἰθέρος
 Πρὸς ἔμην ὁμογενέτερα.
 Περὶ δ' ὤλεας δῖρα φίλτατα
 Βαλλοίμι, χρόνῳ φυγάδα μέλειον.

She stops a little, gazes earnestly upon him, and exclaims with admiration at the splendor of his arms :

Ὡς ὅπλοισι κρυστείοισιν εὐπράγης, γέρον,
 Εὐαῖς ὁμοία φλεγέδων
 Βολαῖς αἰλιῷ. Ver. 166.

† Ver. 187.

dignity

dignity. In the Anthologia, is a description of a statue of Homer, which from its antiquity, and the minute enumeration of the features and attitudes of the figure, is curious and entertaining.

———— Πάτερ δ' εἰμος, ἰσοθιός φως,
 Ἰγάτο θνιός Ομηρος, εἶκτο μιν ἀνδρὶ νοῆσαι
 Ἡρακλῆα, τὸ δὲ γέρας ἔην γλυκὺ· τὸτο γὰρ αὐτοῦ
 Πλειότερην ἔφαξε χάριν· κειραγο δὲ κόσμῳ
 Αἰδῶντι φίλωτι, &c. *

12. The wars of Troy were round the pillar seen :
 Here fierce Tydides wounds the Cyprian queen ;
 Here Hector, glorious from Patroclus' fall,
 Here dragg'd in Triumph round the Trojan wall ;
 Motion and Life did ev'ry part inspire,
 Bold was the work, and prov'd the master's fire †.

THE poems of Homer afford a marvellous variety of subjects proper for history and painting. A very ingenious French nobleman, the count de Caylus, has lately printed a valuable treatise, entituled, "Tableaux tires de L'Iliade, et de L'Odyssée d'Homere," in

* Antholog. ad calcem Callimachi Edit. Lond. 1741. pag. 88.

† Ver. 188.

34 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

which he has exhibited the whole series of events contained in these poems, arranged in their proper order ; has designed each piece, and disposed each figure, with much taste and judgement. He seems justly to wonder, that artists have so seldom had recourse to this great storehouse of beautiful and noble images, so proper for the employment of their pencils, and delivered with so much force and distinctness, that the painter has nothing to do, but to substitute his colours for the words of Homer. He complains that a Raphael, and a Julio Romano should copy the crude and unnatural conceptions of Ovid's metamorphoses, and Apuleius's fables : and that some of their sacred subjects were ill chosen. Among the few who borrowed their subjects from Homer, he mentions Bouchardon with the honour he deserves ; and relates the following anecdote. " This great artist having lately read Homer in an old and detestable French translation, came one day to me, his eyes sparkling with fire, and said, ' Depuis que j'ai

j'ai lu ce livre, les hommes 'ont quinze pieds,
& la Nature s'est accrue pour moi.—" Since I
have read this book, men seem to be fifteen
feet high, and all nature is enlarged in my
sight *."

13. A strong expression most he seem'd t'affect,
And here and there disclos'd a brave Neglect.

IN the sublime, as in great affluence of for-
tune, some minute articles will unavoidably
escape observation. But it is almost impos-
sible for a low and groveling Genius to be
guilty of error, since he never endangers him-
self by soaring on high, or aiming at eminence;
but still goes on in the same uniform, secure
track, whilst its very height and grandeur
exposes the sublime to sudden falls. " Ουδεν
ητιον οιμαι τας μειζονας αρετας, ει και μη εν
πασι διεμαλιζοιεν, την τε πρωτειν ψηφον
μαλλον αει φερεσθαι, και ει μη δι' ενος ετερου,
της μεγαλοφροσυνης αυτης ενεκα †". This
noble sentiment of Longinus, is a suffi-
cient answer to an outrageous paradox lately

* Pag. 227.

† Longinus, SECT. 33. Edit. Tollii, pag. 184.

36 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

advanced by Voltaire, in direct contradiction to his *former* critical opinions; and which is here set down, for the entertainment of the reader. "If we would weigh, without prejudice, the *Odyssæy* of Homer with the *Orlando* of Ariosto, the Italian must gain the preference in all respects. Both of them are chargeable with the same fault, namely, an intemperance and luxuriance of imagination, and a romantic fondness of the marvellous. But Ariosto has compensated this fault by allegories so true, by touches of satire so delicate, by so profound a knowledge of the human heart, by the graces of the comic, which perpetually succeed the strokes of the terrible, in short, by such innumerable beauties of every kind, that he has found out the secret of making an agreeable monster *. Let every

* However M. de Voltaire might laugh at the quoting to him a father of the church, yet the following sensible observation on Homer, might be worth his consideration.

Ομηρος δι' μυστος και ὑψατος, και πρωτος παντι παιδι, και ανδρι και γεροντι, τοσπουτοι αφαιδου διδεις, ὅσον εμας δυναται λαβειν.

Dion. Chrysostom. Orat. 18.

Περί λόγου ασκησις.

reader

reader ask himself what he would think, if he should read for the first time, the *Odyssey*, and Tasso's poem, without knowing the names of their authors, and the times when their works were composed, and determine of them merely by the degree of pleasure they each of them excited; would he not give the entire preference to Tasso? Would he not find in the Italian more conduct and œconomy; more interesting circumstances; more variety and exactness; more graces and embellishments; and more of that softness which eases, relieves, and adds a lustre to, the sublime? I question whether they will even bear a comparison a few ages hence*''.

14. A golden column next in sight appear'd,
On which a shrine of purest gold is rear'd;
Finish'd the whole, and labour'd ev'ry part
With patient touches of unwearied art:
The Mantuan there in sober triumph sat,
Compos'd his posture, and his look sedate,
On Homer still he fix'd a reverend eye,
Great without pride, in modest majesty †.

* Collection complete des Œuvres de Mr. de Voltaire.
Tom. XIII. à Geneve, pag. 46.

† Ver. 196.

38 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

* IL suo carattere e per tutto grande, e maestoso : e, per poterlo sempre sostenere, si trattiene il poeta, perlo più, sul generale, s'fuggendo, a suo potere, tutte le cose minute, e particolari : alle quali Omero, che a voluto mutar corde, e varior tuono, e liberamente andanto all' incontro. E siccome stimeremmo gran fallo biasimare perciò Vergilio, che á saputo cose bene mantenere il carattere propofosi ; così non possiamo non maravigliarci del torto, ch'ad Omero fa Giulio Cesare Scaligero, da cui e riputato basso, e vile, peraver voluto toccare i punti più fini del naturale : quasiche la magnificenza fosse posta solamente nello strepito delle parole——Nell' Egloghe pero

* Vincenzo Gravina was of Naples, had great learning, and a clear head ; was an admirable civilian as well as critic. He wrote five tragedies on the model of the ancients, with chorusses, *Il' Palamede*, *L'Andromeda*, *L'Appio Claudio*, *Il Papiniano*, *Il' Servio Tullio*. It is said that he missed a cardinal's hat because of his satirical and severe turn of mind. When he was at Rome, he used to bow to coach horses, because, said he, was it not for these poor beasts, these great people would have men, and even philosophers, to draw their coaches. Metastasio poet laureat to the empress queen at Vienna, so famous for operas, was his disciple. Gravina founds his critical opinions on the solid principles of Aristotle, that is, in other words, on nature and good sense. See Barretti, pag. 308.

fi prese la liberta di rappresentar costumi alle volte troppo civili, ed innalzo sopra la semplicita pastorale lo stile, trattenendosi troppo sul generale: onde quantò nella Georgica si lasciò addietro Esiodo, tanto nell' Egloghe cede a Teocrito, da cui raccolse i fiori: e nel poema eroico, siccome riman vinto da Omero così e ad ogn' altro superiore *.

15. Four swans sustain'd a car of silver bright,
With heads advanc'd, and pinions stretch'd for flight:
Here, like some furious prophet, Pindar rode,
And seem'd to labour with th' inspiring God.
Across the harp a careless hand he flings,
And boldly sinks into the sounding strings †.

THE character of Pindar, as commonly taken, seems not to be well understood. We hear of nothing but the impetuosity, and the sublimity of his manner; whereas he abounds in strokes of domestic tenderness. We are perpetually

* Gravina della Ragion poetica. In Napoli 1716. p. 308.

POPE speaking to one of his friends concerning absurd comparisons, mentioned, as such, the comparing Homer with Virgil, Corneille with Racine, the little ivory statue of Polyclete with the Colossus. These, he added, are magis *pares quam similes*.

† Ver. 210,

40 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

perpetually told of the boldness and violence of his transitions, whereas on a close inspection they appear easy and natural, are closely connected with, and arise appositely from, his subject. Even his style has been represented as swelling and bombast; but carefully examined, it will appear pure and perspicuous, not abounding with those harsh metaphors, and that profusion of florid epithets, which some of his imitators affect to use. One of Pindar's arts, in which they frequently fail who copy him, is the introduction of many moral reflections. Mr. Gray seems thoroughly to have studied this writer. The following beautiful lines are closely translated from the first Pythian Ode. They describe the Power of music.

Oh sovereign of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
Enchanting shell! the sullen cares,
And frantic passions hear thy soft controul.
On Thracia's hills the lord of war
Has curb'd the fury of his car,
And dropp'd his thirsty lance at thy command.
Perching on the sceptred hand

Of

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 41

Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feather'd king,
With ruffled plumes, and flagging wing:
Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and lightening of his eye *.

THE reader will doubtless be pleased, to see these striking images copied by another masterly hand.

— — — — With slacken'd wings,
While now the solemn concert breathes around,
Incumbent o'er the sceptre of his lord
Sleeps the stern eagle; by the number'd notes
Possess'd; and satiate with the melting tone;
Sovereign of birds. The furious God of war
His darts forgetting, and the rapid wheels
That bear him vengeful o'er the embattled plains,
Relents †. ———

It is to be observed, that both these imitations have omitted a natural circumstance, very expressive of the strong feeling of the eagle; but very difficult to be translated with becoming elegance.

* Doddsley's Collection, vol. VI. p. 322.

† Ibid. vol. VI. p. 13. HYMN to the Naiads, by Dr. Akenfide.

— — — Ο δὲ κινῶστων

Υγρον ἰωτον αἰρεῖ, τεταῖς

ΡΙΠΑΙΣΙ ΚΑΤΑΣΚΟΜΕΝΟΣ *.

MAY I venture to add, that this ode of Mr. Gray, ends a little unhappily? That is, with an antithesis unsuited to the dignity of such a composition;

Beneath the Good how far, but far above the Great.

It may be also questioned, whether his ode on the Druids might not have been better concluded without mentioning the manner

* Pindar, Pyth. I. Antistrophe 1. v. 5.

This image puts me in mind of a fine stroke in Apollonius Rhodius, who thus describes the effects of Medea's enchantments on the dragon who watch'd the golden fleece.

— — — αὐτὰρ ὅγ' ἤδη

Οἴμῃ θελγομένη, δολιχὴν ἀνάλυσ' ἀκάνθας

Τρυγᾶσι σπείρης, μήκυνε δὲ μυρία πυκλά.

Lib. IV. ver. 150.

Few moderns have boldness enough to enter on circumstances so MINUTELY NATURAL, and therefore highly expressive; they are afraid of being thought vulgar and flat. Apollonius has more merit than is usually allowed him, and deserves more consideration among the learned: the whole behaviour and passion of Medea is movingly described. He particularly abounds in such lively and delicate strokes as that quoted above.

in

in which the bard died. There would have been a beautiful abruptness in finishing with—

Be thine despair, and sceptred care,
To triumph and to die are mine.

The mind would have been left in a pleasing and artful suspense, at not knowing what became of so favourite a character. Lyric poetry especially, should not be minutely historical. When Juno had ended her speech in Horace with that spirited stanza,

Ter si resurgat murus aeneus
Auctore Phœbo, ter pereat meis
Excisus Arvigis, ter uxor
Capta, virum, puerosque ploret.

What follows surely weakens the conclusion of this ode, and is comparatively flat.

Non hæc jocosæ conveniunt lyræ :
Quo Musa tendis * ?

The inspiration, under which the poet seems to have laboured, suddenly ceases, and he descends into a cold and prosaic apology.

* Ode III. lib. iii. ver. 70.

16. Here happy Horace tun'd th' Ausonian lyre,
 To sweeter sounds, and temper'd Pindar's fire:
 Pleas'd with Alcæus' manly rage t' infuse
 The softer spirit of the Sapphic muse *.

He might have selected ornaments more
 manly and characteristical of Horace, than—

The Doves, that round the infant poet spread
 Myrtles and bays, hung hovering o'er his head †:

Surely his odes afford many more striking
 subjects for the basso relievos about his statue. In the present ones do we not see a
 littleness, or rather a prettiness?

Our author alludes to the lyric part of
 Horace's works. Among the various views
 in which his numerous commentators have
 considered his odes, they have neglected to
 remark the DRAMATIC turn he has given
 to many of them. Of this sort, is the excellent
 prophecy of Nereus, where Horace
 has artfully introduced the principal events
 and heroes of the Iliad, and speaks in so

* Ver. 225.

† Ver. 226.

lively a manner of both, as to make the reader present at every action intended. Of this sort also is the third ode of the third book, in which Juno is introduced, expressing herself with all that fury and indignation against the Trojans, which Homer hath ascribed to her. She begins her speech with an angry repetition of *Ilion, Ilion*, and will not so much as utter the names of Paris and Helen, but contemptuously calls him, the *incestus Judex*, and her, *Mulier peregrina**. The character of this revengeful goddess is all along supported with the same spirit and propriety. Equal commendation is due to the speech of Regulus in the fifth ode, on his preparing to return to Carthage, which ends with an exclamation so suited to the temper of that inflexible hero.

— — — O Pudor!

O magna Carthago, probroſis

Altior Italiæ ruinis!

NOR muſt we forget the natural complaints of Europa, when ſhe has been carried away by

* This hath been obſerved by the old commentator, Acron.

the

46 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

the bull, and the shame that arises in her bosom, on her having been seduced from her father, friends and country.

Impudens liqui patrios Penates !

Impudens Orcum moror ! O deorum

Si quis, hæc audis, utinam inter errem

*Nuda leones *.*

Immediately another *Prosopopœia* is introduced. She thinks she hears her angry father, rebuking her,

Vilis Europe (pater urget absens)

Quid meri cessas ? &c.

Of this dramatic species also, is the conclusion of the eleventh ode of the third book, where one of the daughters of Danaüs, who is not base enough to comply with her father's commands, dismisses her husband with a speech that is much in character. I cannot forbear adding, that, of this kind, likewise is the whole of the fifth Epode, upon which I beg leave to be a little particular, as I do not remember to have seen it considered as it ought to be. It suddenly breaks out with a beautiful and forcible abruptness.

* Ode XXXVII. lib. iii.

At O Deorum quisquis in cœlo regis
 Terras et humanum genus,
 Quid iste fert tumultus ? aut quid omnium
 Vultus in unum me truces ?

It is a boy utters these words, who beholds himself surrounded by an horrible band of witches, with Canidia at their head, who instantly seize and strip him, in order to make a love-potion of his body. He proceeds to deprecate their undeserved rage by moving supplications, and such as are adapted to his age and situation.

Per liberos te, si vocata partibus
 Lucina veris adfuit ;
 Per hoc inane purpuræ decus, precor,
 Per improbaturum hæc Jovem ;
 Quid ut noverca, me intueris, aut uti
 Petita ferro bellua ?

The poet goes on to enumerate, with due solemnity, the ingredients of the charm. Those which * Shakespear in his *Mackbeth* has described, as being thrown into the magical

* It is observable, that Shakespear on this great occasion, which involves the fate of a king, multiplies all the circumstances

48 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

caldron, have a near resemblance with these of Horace, but he has added others well calculated to impress the deepest terror, from his own imagination. Canidia having placed the victim in a pit where he was gradually to be starved to death, begins to speak in the following awful and striking manner,

— — — O Rebus meis
Non infideles arbitræ,
Nox, & Diana, quæ silentium regis,
Arcana cum fiunt sacra !
Nunc, nunc adeste ! nunc in hostiles domos
Iram atque numen vertite, &c.

But she suddenly stops, surprized to see the incantation fail.

Quid accidit ?——cur dira barbaræ minus
Venena Medæ valent ?

stances of horror. The babe, whose finger is used in the enchantment, must be strangled in its birth, the grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer ; and even the sow, whose blood is used, must have offended nature by devouring her own farrow.

Johnson's Observations on Macbeth. Act IV. Scene 1.

In.

In a few lines more, she discovers the reason
that her charms are inefficacious.

Ah, ah solutus ambulat veneficæ, &c.

She resolves therefore to double them,

* Majus parabo : majus infundam tibi
Fastidienti poculum.

And concludes with this spirited threat.

Priusque cœlum fidet inferius mari
Tellurem porrecta super,
Quam non amore sic meo flagres, uti
Bitumen atris ignibus.

The

* Sanadon has a remark in the true spirit of a fastidious French critic. "These descriptions of witchcraft must have been very pleasing to ancient poets, since they dwell upon them so largely and frequently. But surely such objects have so much horror in them, that they cannot be presented with too much haste and rapidity to the imagination."—Such false delicacy and refinement have rendered some of the French incapable of relishing many of the forcible and masculine images with which the ancients strengthened their compositions. The most natural strokes in a poem that most abounds with them, the *Odyssey*, is to such judges a fund of ridicule. They must needs nauseate the scenes that lie in Eumeus's cottage, and despise the coarse ideas of so ill-bred a princess as *Nausicaa*. Much less can such effeminate judges bear the bold and severe strokes, the terrible graces, of our irregular *Shakespear*, especially in his scenes of magic and

50 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

The boy, on hearing his fate thus cruelly determined, no longer endeavours to sue for mercy, but breaks out into those bitter and natural execrations, mixed with a tender mention of his parents, which reach to the end of the ode. If we consider how naturally the fear of the boy is expressed in the first speech, and how

incantations. These *gothic charms* are in truth more striking to the imagination than the *classical*. The magicians of Ariosto, Tasso, and Spencer, have more powerful spells, than those of Apollonius, Seneca, and Lucan. The enchanted forest of Ismeno is more awfully and tremendously poetical than even the Grove, which Cæsar orders to be cut down, in Lucan, l. iii. 400, which was so full of terrors, that at noon-day or midnight, the Priest himself dared not approach it,

Dreading the Dæmon of the Grove to meet!

Who, that sees the sable *plumes* waving on the prodigious helmet, in the castle of Otranto, and the gigantic *arm* on the top of *the great staircase*, is not more affected than with the paintings of Ovid and Apuleius? What a group of dreadful images do we meet with in the *Edda*? The Runic poetry abounds in them. 'Tis remarkable, that the idea of the Fatal Sisters weaving the Danish standard, bears a marvellous resemblance to a passage in Sophocles, Ajax, v. 1053. "Did not Erinnys herself make this sword? and Pluto, that dreadful workman, this belt?"

the

the dreadful character of Canidia is supported in the second, and the various turns of passion with which she is agitated ; and if we add to these the concluding imprecations : we must own that this ode affords a noble specimen of the dramatic powers of Horace.

17. Here in a shrine that cast a dazzling light,
 Sate fix'd in thought, the mighty Stagyrte ;
 His sacred head a radiant zodiac crown'd,
 And various animals his sides surround ;
 His piercing eyes, erect, appear to view
 Superior worlds, and look all Nature through *.

It may not be unpleasing to observe the artful manner with which Addison has introduced each of his worthies at the Tables of Fame, and how nicely he has adapted the behaviour of each person to his character. Addison had great skill in the use of delicate and oblique allusions.—— “ It was expected that Plato would have taken a place next his master Socrates ; but on a sudden there was heard a great clamour of disputants at the door, who appeared with Aristotle at the head

H 2 of

* Ver. 232.

52 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

of them. That philosopher with some rudeness, but great strength of reason, convinced the whole table that a fifth place at the table was his due, and took it accordingly." Thus in another passage.—"Julius Cæsar was now coming forward; and though most of the historians offered their service to introduce him, he left them at the door, and would have no conductor but himself."—In the same spirit he tells us; That Q. Curtius intended to conduct Alexander the Great, to an apartment appointed for the reception of fabulous heroes; that Virgil hung back at the entrance of the door, and would have excused himself, had not his modesty been overcome by the invitation of all who sat at the table; that Lucan entered at the head of many historians with Pompey, and that seeing Homer and Virgil at the table, was going to sit down himself, had not the latter whispered him, he had forfeited his claim to it, by coming in as one of the historians.

18. With equal rays immortal TULLY shone,
The Roman rostra deck'd the Consul's throne;

* Tatler, No. 81, ut sup.

Gath'ring

Gath'ring his flowing robe he seem'd to stand,
In act to speak, and graceful stretch'd his hand.

THIS beautiful attitude is copied from a statue in that valuable collection, which Lady Pomfret had the goodness and generosity lately to present to the university of Oxford.— Cicero, says Addison, next appeared and took his place. He had enquired at the door for one Luceius to introduce him; but not finding him there, he contented himself with the attendance of many other writers, who all, except Sallust, appeared highly pleased with the office.

I CANNOT forbear taking occasion to mention an ingenious imitation of this paper of Addison, called the Table of Modern Fame, at which the guests are introduced and ranged with that taste and judgement which is peculiar to the author *. It may not be unenterprising to enumerate the persons in the order he has placed them, by which his sense of their merits will appear. Columbus, Peter the Great,

* Supposed to be Dr. Akenfide. Doddsley's Museum, No. 13.

54 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Leo X. Martin Luther, Newton, Descartes,
Lewis XIV. William the first Prince of
Orange, Edward the Black Prince, Francis I.
Charles V. Locke, Galileo, John Faust,
Harvey, Machiavel, Taffo, Ariosto, POPE,
Boileau, Bacon *, Milton †, Cervantes,
Moliere.

19. When on the Goddeſs firſt I caſt my ſight,
Scarce ſeem'd her ſtature of a cubit's height;
But ſwell'd to larger height the more I gaz'd,
Till to the roof her tow'ring height ſhe rais'd †.

* "The aſſembly with one accord invited Bacon forward, the Goddeſs beckoned him to draw near, and ſeated him on the higheſt throne." Muſæum, No. 13.

† "I was extremely diſcontented that no more honourable place had been reſerved for Milton. You forget, ſays my conductor, that the loweſt place in this aſſembly, is one of twenty, the moſt honourable gifts which Fame has to beſtow among the whole human ſpecies. Milton is now admitted for the firſt time, and was not but with difficulty admitted at all. But have patience a few years longer; he will be continually aſcending in the goddeſs's favour, and may perhaps at laſt obtain the higheſt, or at leaſt the ſecond place, in theſe her ſolemnities. In the mean time, ſee how he is received by the man who is beſt qualified here to judge of his dignity." I looked at him again, and ſaw Raphael making him the moſt affectionate congratulations." Muſæum, No. 13.

† Ver. 257.

This

This figure of Fame enlarging and growing every moment, which is copied from Virgil, is imagined with strength and sublimity of fancy.

Parva metu primo, mox sese attollit in auras,
Ingrediturque solo, et caput inter nubila condit *.

There is another figure of this sort in the Georgics of Virgil, as nobly conceived. Instead of saying that the pestilence among the cattle encreased daily, what an exalted image has he given us !

Sævit et in lucem Stygiis emissâ tenebris
Pallida TYSIPHONE. MORBOS agit ante METUMQUE,
Inque dies avidum surgens caput altius effert.

The sybil in the sixth Æneid is likewise represented as spreading to fight, and growing larger and larger as the inspiration came upon her.

— — Subito non vultus, non color unus,
Non comptæ mansere comæ ; sed pectus anhelum,
Et rabie fera corda tument ; majorque videri,
Nec mortale sonans †. —

* Book IV. ver. 175.

† Ver. 47.

56 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

We have still a fourth instance of Virgil's imagination, in the spirited picture he has drawn of the fury who appears to Turnus in the seventh *Æneid* *. Turnus at first, suitably to his character, treats her as an impertinent old priestess, whose habit she had indeed borrowed. Upon which she instantly kindles into rage, assumes her own horrid shape in a moment; the serpents hiss around her head, and her countenance spreads forth in all its terrors.

At juveni oranti subitus tremor occupat artus;
Diriguere oculi; tot Erinny's sibilat hydris,
Tantaque se facies aperit. —

In no part of Virgil's writings is there more true spirit and sublimity, than in this interview between Turnus and the fury, both whose characters are strongly supported. But to return to FAME. Virgil has represented her as a dreadful and gigantic monster, in which conception, though he might have been assisted by the DISCORD of Homer, yet his

* Ver. 448.

figure is admirably designed to impress terror. She has innumerable tongues, mouths, eyes and ears; the sound of her wings is heard at the dead of night, as she flies through the middle of the air.

Nocte volat coeli medio, terræque per umbram
Stridens.———

In the day time she sits watchful on battlements, and on the highest towers, and terrifies great cities, who gaze at her huge and formidable appearance.

Luce sedet custos, aut summi culmine tecti,
Turribus aut altis, et magnas territat urbes.

It did not suit POPE's purpose, to represent FAME as so odious a monster. He has therefore dropped these striking circumstances in Virgil, and softened her features.

20. With her the Temple ev'ry moment grew,
And ampler vistas opened to my view:
Upwards the columns shoot, the roofs ascend,
And arches widen, and long ile extend*.

ANON out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound

Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
 Built like a temple, whose pilasters round
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
 With golden architrave *.—

THIS circumstance of the temple's enlarging with the growing figure of the goddess, is lively, new, and well imagined. The reader feels a pleasure in having his eye carried through a length of building, almost to an immensity. Extension is certainly a cause of the sublime. In this view the following passage of Thompson may be considered, where he speaks of a lazaret-house in his *Castle of Indolence* †.

Through the drear caverns stretching many a mile,
 The sick uprear'd their heads, and dropp'd their woes
 awhile.

21. Next these a youthful train their vows express'd,
 With feathers crown'd, and gay embroid'ry dress'd:
 Hither, they cry'd, direct your eyes and see
 The men of pleasure, dress, and gallantry;
 Ours is the place, at banquets, balls and plays,
 Sprightly our nights, polite are all our days:

* Par. Lost, b. i. ver. 712.

† Stanza lxix. c. 2.

Of unknown dutcheſſes lewd tales we tell,
Yet, would the world believe us, all were well *.

STROKES of pleaſantry and humour, and ſatirical reflections on the foibles of common life, are ſurely too familiar, and unſuited to ſo grave and majeſtic a poem as this hitherto has appeared to be. Such incongruities offend propriety; though I know ingenious perſons have endeavoured to excuſe them, by ſaying that they add a variety of imagery to the piece. This practice is even defended by a paſſage in Horace.

*Et ſermone opus eſt modo triſti, ſæpe jocoſo,
Defendente vicem modo rhetoris atque poetæ,
Interdum urbani, parcentis viribus, atque
Extenuantis eas conſulto.——*

But this judicious remark is, I apprehend, confined to ethic and preceptive kinds of writing, which ſtand in need of being enlivened with lighter images, and ſportive thoughts; and where ſtrictures on common

* Ver. 380.

60 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

life, may more gracefully be inserted. But in the higher kinds of poesy they appear as unnatural and out of place, as one of the burlesque scenes of Heemskirk would do, in a solemn landscape of Pouffin. When I see such a line as

“ And at each blast a lady’s honour dies ”——

in the TEMPLE of FAME, I lament as much to find it placed there, as to see shops, and sheds, and cottages, erected among the ruins of Dioclesian’s Baths.

ON the revival of literature, the first writers seemed not to have observed any SELECTION in their thoughts and images. Dante, Petrarch, Boccacio, Ariosto, make very sudden transitions from the sublime to the ridiculous. Chaucer in his Temple of Mars, among many pathetic pictures, has brought in a strange line,

The coke is scalded for all his long ladell *.

* Thus again;——“ As Æsop’s dogs contending for a bone.”——and many others.

No

No writer has more religiously observed the decorum here recommended than Virgil.

22. This having heard and seen, some pow'r unknown
 Strait chang'd the scene, and snatch'd me from the
 throne ;
 Before my view appear'd a structure fair,
 Its site uncertain, if in earth or air *.

THE scene here changes from the TEMPLE of FAME to that of Rumour. Such a change is not methinks judicious, as it destroys the unity of the subject, and distracts the view of the reader ; not to mention, that the difference between Rumour and Fame is not sufficiently distinct and perceptible. POPE has however the merit of compressing the sense of a great number of Chaucer's lines into a small compass. As Chaucer takes every opportunity of satyrizing the follies of his age, he has in this part introduced many circumstances, which it was prudent in POPE to omit, as they would not have been either relished or understood in the present times.

* Ver, 417.

62 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

23. While thus I stood intent to see and hear,
 One came, methought, and whisper'd my ear:
 What could thus high thy rash ambition raise?
 Art thou, fond youth, a candidate for praise?
 'Tis true, said I, not void of hopes I came,
 For who so fond as youthful bards of Fame*?

THIS conclusion is not copied from Chaucer; and is judicious. Chaucer has finished his story inartificially, by saying he was surprized at the sight of a man of great authority, and awoke in a fright. The succeeding lines give a pleasing moral to the allegory, and the two last shew the man of honour and virtue, as well as the poet.

Unblemish'd let me live, or die unknown:
 Oh grant an honest fame, or grant me none!

IN finishing this Section, we may observe, that POPE's alterations of Chaucer are introduced with judgment and art; that these alterations are more in number, and more important in conduct, than any Dryden has made of the same author. This piece was communicated to Steele, who entertained a

* Ver. 496.

high opinion of its beauties, and who conveyed it to Addison. POPE had ornamented the poem with the machinery of guardian angels, which he afterwards omitted. He speaks of his work with a diffidence uncommon in a young poet, and which does him credit *. “No errors, says he to Steele, are so trivial, but they deserve to be mended. I could point to you several, but it is my business to be informed of those faults I do not know; and as for those I do, not to talk of them, but mend them.—I am afraid of nothing so much as to impose any thing upon the world which is unworthy its acceptance.”

It would have been matter of curiosity to have known Addison's sentiments of this vision †. His own is introduced and carried on with that vein of propriety and poetry, for which this species of his writings is so justly celebrated, and which contribute to place him at the head of allegorical writers, scarce excepting Plato himself.

* Vol. VII. Letters, 8vo. p. 248.

† See Tatler, No. 81, referred to above.

S E C T. VIII.

*Of JANUARY and MAY, The Wife
of BATH, and TRANSLATIONS of
STATIUS and OVID.*

THE first dawnings of polite literature in Italy, appeared in tale-writing and fables. Boccaccio gave a currency and vogue to this species of composition. He collected many of the common tales of his country, and delivered them in the purest stile, enlivened with interesting circumstances. Sacchetti published tales before him, in which are many anecdotes of Dante and his cotemporaries. Boccaccio was faintly imitated by several Italians, Poggio, Bandello, Cinthio, Firenzuola, Malespini, and others. * Machiavel himself did honour to this species of writing, by his Belphegor.

* Machiavel, who possessed the liveliest wit with the profoundest reflection, wrote also two comedies, Mandragora and Clytia, the former of which was played before Leo X. with much magnificence; the latter is an imitation of the
Cassina

To produce, and carry on with probability and decorum, a series of events, is the most difficult work of invention; and if we were minutely to examine the popular stories of every nation, we should be amazed to find how few circumstances have been ever invented. Facts and events have been indeed varied and modified, but totally new ones have not been created. The writers of the old romances, from whom Ariosto and Spencer have borrowed so largely, are supposed to have had copious imaginations: but may they not be indebted, for their invulnerable heroes, their monsters, their enchantments, their gardens of pleasure, their winged steeds, and the like, to the Echidna, to the Circe, to the Medea, to the Achilles, to the Syrens, to the Harpies, to the Phryxus, and the Bellerophon

Cassina of Plautus; "*Indigna vero homine Christiano* (says Balzac) *qui sanctiores Musas colit, et, in ludicris quoque, meminisse debet severitatis.*" *Epist. Select.* pag. 202. I have been informed that Machiavel towards the latter part of his life grew religious, and that some pieces of ascetic devotion, composed by him, are preserved in the libraries of Italy. Lord Bacon says remarkably of Machiavel, that he teaches, *quid homines facere soleant, non quid debeant.*

66 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

of the ancients? The cave of Polyphème might furnish out the ideas of their giants, and Andromeda might give occasion for stories of distressed damsels on the point of being devoured by dragons, and delivered at such a critical season by their favourite knights. Some faint traditions of the ancients might have been kept glimmering and alive during the whole barbarous ages, as they are called; and it is not impossible, but these have been the parents of the Genii in the eastern, and the Fairies in the western world. To say that Amadis and Sir Tristan have a classical foundation, may at first sight appear paradoxical; but if the subject were examined to the bottom, I am inclined to think, that the wildest chimeras in those books of chivalry with which Don Quixote's library was furnished, would be found to have a close connexion with ancient mythology.

WE of this nation have been remarkably barren in our inventions of facts; we have been chiefly borrowers in this species of composition;

position; as the plots of our most applauded plays, both in tragedy and comedy, may witness, which have generally been taken from the novels of the Italians and Spaniards.

THE story of JANUARY and MAY now before us, is of the comic kind, and the character of a fond old dotard betrayed into disgrace by an unsuitable match, is supported in a lively manner. POPE has endeavoured, suitably to familiarize the stateliness of our heroic measure, in this ludicrous narrative; but after all his pains, this measure is not adapted to such subjects, so well as the lines of four feet, or the French numbers of Fontaine *. Fontaine is, in truth, the capital and unrivalled writer of comic tales. He generally took his subjects from Boccaccio, † Poggius, and Ariosto; but adorned them

* It is to be lamented that Fontaine has so frequently transgressed the bounds of modesty. Boileau did not look upon Fontaine as an original writer, and used to say he had borrowed both his style and matter from Marot and Rabelais.

† “Poggius Florentinus in hoc numero eloquentium virorum singulare nomen obtinet. Scripsit de nobilitate, de avaritia,

68 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

them with so many natural strokes, with such quaintness in his reflections, and such a dryness and archness of humour, as cannot fail to excite laughter.

OUR Prior has happily caught his manner, in many of his lighter tales; particularly in Hans Carvel, the invention of which, if its genealogy be worth tracing, is first due to Poggius. It is found in the hundred and thirty-third of his *Facetiæ*, where it is entitled *Visio Francisci Philelphi*; from hence Rabelais inserted it, under another title, in his third book and twenty-eighth chapter; it was afterwards related in a book called the * HUNDRED NOVELS; Ariosto finishes his fifth satire with it; Malespini also made use of it; Fontaine who imagined Rabelais to be the in-

de principum infelicitate, de moribus Indorum, FACETIARUM quoque librum unum. Ab adversariis exagitatus orationes ple-
rasque investivas edidit. In epistolis etiam laudatur. Cyro-
pædiam, quam Xenophon ille scripsit, latinam reddidit, atque
Alphonso regi dedicavit, pro qua a rege magnam mercedem
accepit." *Facies de viris illustribus, Florentiæ, 1745.*

* See *McNagiana*, Vol. I. p. 368.

ventor of it, was the sixth author who delivered it, as our Prior was the last; and perhaps not the least spirited.

RABELAIS was not the inventor of many of the burlesque tales he introduced into his principal story; the finest touches of which, it is to be feared, have undergone the usual and unavoidable fate of satirical writings, that is, not to be tasted or understood, when the characters, the facts and the follies they stigmatize, are perished and unknown. Gulliver in the next century, will be as obscure as Gargantua; and Hudibras and the satire Menippe cannot be read, without voluminous commentaries.

THE WIFE OF BATH, is the other piece of Chaucer which POPE selected to imitate: One cannot but wonder at his choice, which perhaps nothing but his youth could excuse. Dryden, who is known not to be nicely scrupulous, informs us that he would not versify it on account of its indecency.

70 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

indecentcy. POPE however has omitted or softened the groffer and more offensive passages. Chaucer afforded him many subjects of a more serious and sublime species ; and it were to be wished, POPE had exercised his pencil on the pathetic story of the patience of Griselda, or Troilus and Cressida, or the complaint of the black knight ; or, above all, on Cambuscan and Canace. From the accidental circumstance of Dryden and POPE's having copied the gay and ludicrous parts of Chaucer, the common notion seems to have arisen, that Chaucer's vein of poetry was chiefly turned to the light and the ridiculous *. In a word, they who look into Chaucer, will soon be convinced of this prevailing prejudice, and will find his comic vein to be only like one of mercury, imperceptibly mingled with a mine of gold.

* Cowley is said to have despised Chaucer. I am not surprized at this strange judgment. Cowley was indisputably a Genius, but his taste was perverted and narrowed by a love of witticisms.

CHAUCER

CHAUCER is still more highly magnified by Dryden, in the spirited and pleasing preface to his *Fables*; for his prefaces, after all, are very pleasing; notwithstanding the opposite opinions they contain, because his prose is the most numerous and sweet, the most *mellow* and *generous*, of any our language has yet produced. His digressions and ramblings, which he himself says he learned of honest Montaigne, are interesting and amusing. In this preface is a passage worth particular notice, not only for the justness of the criticism, but because it contains a censure of *Cowley*. "Chaucer is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all subjects: As he knew what to say, so he also knows where to leave off; a continence, which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. *One of our late great poets* is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any *Conceit* that came in his way; but swept, like a drag-net,

great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill-sorted; whole pyramids of sweet-meats for boys and women; but little of solid meat, for men. All this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment; neither did he want that, in discerning the beauties and faults of other poets; but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer; and for ten impressions which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelvemonth." It is a circumstance of literary history worth mentioning, that Chaucer was more than 60 years old when he wrote *Palamon and Arcite*, as we know Dryden was 70, when he versified it. The lines of Pope, in the piece before us, are spirited and easy, and have, properly enough, a free colloquial air. One passage,

I cannot

I cannot forbear quoting, as it acquaints us with the writers who were popular in the time of Chaucer. The jocose old woman says, that her husband frequently read to her out of a volume that contained,

Valerius whole : and of Saint Jerome part ;
 Chrysippus, and Tertullian, Ovid's art,
 Solomon's proverbs, Eloisa's loves ;
 With many more than sure the church approves *.

POPE has omitted a stroke of humour ; for in the original, she naturally mistakes the rank and age of St. Jerome : the lines must be transcribed.

Yclepid Valerie and Theophrast,
 At which boke he lough alwey full fast ;
 And eke there was a clerk sometime in Rome,
 A cardinal, that hightin St. Jerome,
 That made a boke agenst Jovinian,
 In which boke there was eke Tertullian,
 Chrysippus, Trotula, and Helowis,
 That was an Abbess not ferr fro Paris.

* Ver. 359.

And eke the Parables of Solomon,
Ovid' is art, and bokis many a one *.

IN the library which Charles V. founded in France about the year thirteen hundred and seventy six, among many books of devotion, astrology, chemistry and romance, there was not one copy of Tully to be found, and no Latin poet but Ovid, Lucan and Boethius; some French translations of Livy, Valerius Maximus, and St. Austin's City of God. He placed these in one of the towers of the old Louvre, which was called the tower of the library. This was the foundation of the present magnificent royal library at Paris.

The tale to which this is the Prologue, has been verified by Dryden; and is supposed to have been of Chaucer's own contrivance: as is also the elegant VISION of *the flower and the leaf*, which has received new graces from the spirited and harmonious Dryden. It is

* Ver. 671.

to his fables, though wrote in his old age *, that Dryden will owe his immortality, and among them, particularly, to Palamon and Arcite, Sigismunda and Guiscardo, Theodore and Honoria ; and to his music ode. The warmth and melody of these pieces, has never been excelled in our language, I mean in rhyme. As general and unexemplified criticism is always useless and absurd, I must beg leave to select a few passages from these three poems, and the reader must not think any observations on the character of Dryden, the constant pattern of POPE, unconnected with the main subject of this work. The picture of Arcite in the absence of Emilia, is highly expressive of the deepest distress, and a complete image of anguish.

He rav'd with all the madness of despair,
He roar'd, he beat his breast, he tore his hair.

* The falling off of his hair, said a man of wit, had no other consequence, than to make his laurels to be seen the more. A person who translated some pieces after Dryden used to say,

————— Experto credite, quantus
In clypeum assurgat, quo turbine torqueat hastam.

Crebillon was ninety when he brought his Catiline on the stage.

Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,
 For wanting nourishment, he wanted tears :
 His eye-balls in their hollow sockets sink,
 Bereft of sleep he loaths his meat and drink ;
 He withers at his heart, and looks as wan,
 As the pale spectre of a murder'd man *.

THE image of the Suicide is equally picturesque and pathetic.

The slayer of himself yet saw I there
 The gore congeal'd was clotted in his hair :
 With eyes half-clos'd and gaping mouth he lay,
 And grim, as when he breath'd his fullen soul away.

This reminds me of that forcible description in a writer whose fancy was eminently strong.
 “ Catilina vero, longe a suis, inter hostium ca-
 “ davera repertus est, paululum etiam spirans ;
 “ ferociamque animi, quam habuerat vivus, in
 “ vultu retinens.” Nor must I omit that affecting image in Spenser, who ever excels in the pathetic,

And him besides there lay upon the grass
 A dreary corse, whose life away did pass,

* Palamon and Arcite, Book I.

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 77

All wallow'd in his own, yet lukewarm, blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh, alas !
In which a rusty knife fast fixed stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing flood *.

When Palamon perceived his rival had
escaped,

— He stares, he stamps the ground ;
The hollow tow'r with clamour rings around :
With briny tears he bath'd his fetter'd feet,
And dropp'd all o'er with agony of sweat.

Nor are the feelings of Palamon less strongly
impressed on the reader, where he says,

The rage of Jealousy then fir'd his soul,
And his face kindled like a burning coal :
Now cold despair succeeding in her stead,
To livid paleness turn'd the glowing red †.

If we pass on from descriptions of persons
to those of things, we shall find this poem

* Fairy Queen, Book I. Canto 9. Stanza 36.

† These passages are chiefly of the pathetic sort ; for which Dryden in his tragedies is far from being remarkable. But it is not unusual for the same person to succeed in describing externally a distressful character, who may miserably fail in putting proper words in the mouth of such a character. In a word, so much more difficult is DRAMATIC than DESCRIPTIVE poetry !

equally

78 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

equally excellent. The temple of Mars, is situated with propriety, in a country desolate and joyless; all around it,

The landscape was a forest wide and bare;
Where neither beast nor human kind repair;
The fowl, that scent afar, the borders fly,
And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the sky.
A cake of scurf lies baking on the ground,
And prickly stubs instead of trees are found.

The temple itself is nobly and magnificently studied; and, at the same time, adapted to to the furious nature of the God to whom it belonged; and carries with it a barbarous and tremendous idea.

The frame of burnish'd steel that cast a glare
From far, and seem'd to thaw the freezing air.
A strait long entry to the temple led,
Blind with high walls and horror over-head:
Thence issued such a blast and hollow roar,
As threaten'd from the hinge to heave the door,
In through the door a northern light there shone,
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none.
The gate of adamant, eternal frame,
Which hew'd by Mars himself from Indian quarries
came.

This

This scene of terror is judiciously contrasted by the pleasing and joyous imagery of the temples of Venus and Diana. The figure of the last goddess, is a design fit for GUIDO to execute.

The graceful Goddess was array'd in green;
About her feet were little beagles seen,
That watch'd with UPWARD eyes the motions of their
queen.

But above all, the whole description of the entering the lists *, and of the ensuing combat, which is told at length, in the middle of the third book, is marvellously spirited; and so lively, as to make us spectators of that interesting and magnificent tournament. Even the absurdity of feigning ancient heroes, such as Theseus and Lycurgus, present at the lists and a modern combat, is overwhelmed and obliterated amidst the blaze, the pomp, and the profusion of such animated poetry. Fri-

* The reader is desired all along to remember, that the first delineation of all these images is in Chaucer, and it might be worth examining how much Dryden has added purely from his own stock

80 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

gid and phlegmatic must be the critic, who could have leisure dully and soberly to attend to the anachronism on so striking an occasion. The mind is whirled away by a torrent of rapid imagery, and propriety is forgot.

THE tale of Sigismonda and Guiscardo is heightened with many new and affecting touches by Dryden. I shall select only the following picture of Sigismonda, as it has the same attitude in which she appears in a famous piece of CORREGGIO.

Mute, solemn sorrow, free from female noise,
Such as the Majesty of grief destroys :
For bending o'er the cup, the tears she shed
Seem'd by the posture to discharge her head,
O'erfill'd before ; and oft (her mouth apply'd
To the cold heart) she kiss'd at once and cry'd.

There is an incomparable wildness in the vision of Theodore and Honoria *, that repre-

* This is one of Boccace's most serious stories. " It is a curious thing to see at the head of an edition of Boccace's tales, printed at Florence in 1573, a privilege of Gregory XIII. who says, that in this he follows the steps of Pius V. his predecessor, of blessed memory, and which threatens with severe

sents the furious spectre of "the horseman ghost that came thundering for his prey," and of the gaunt mastiffs that tore the sides of the shrieking damsel he pursued; which is a subject worthy the pencil of Spagnoletti, as it partakes of that savageness which is so striking to the imagination. I shall confine myself to point out only two passages, which relate the two appearances of this formidable figure: and I place them last, as I think them the most lofty of any part of Dryden's works.

Whilst list'ning to the murm'ring leaves he stood,
More than a mile immers'd within the wood,
At once the wind was laid—the whisp'ring sound
Was dumb—a rising earthquake rock'd the ground:
With deeper brown the grove was overpread,
And his ears tingled, and his colour fled.

The sensations of a man upon the approach of some strange and supernatural danger, can scarcely be represented more feelingly. All

severe punishments all those, who shall dare to give any disturbance to those booksellers to whom this privilege is granted. There is also a decree of the inquisition in favour of this edition, in which the holy father caused some alterations to be made." LONGUERUANA, Tom. II. p. 62: a Berlin, 1754.

82 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

nature is thus said to sympathize at the second appearance of .

— — The felon on his fable steed
Arm'd with his naked sword that urg'd his dogs to speed.

Thus it runs——

The fiend's alarm began ; the hollow sound
Sung in the leaves, the forest shook around,
Air blacken'd, roll'd the thunder, groan'd the ground.

BUT to conclude this digression on Dryden. It must be owned, that his ode on the power of music, which is the chief ornament of this volume, is the most unrivalled of his compositions. By that strange fatality which seems to disqualify authors from judging of their own works, he does not appear to have valued this piece, because he totally omits it in the enumeration and criticism he has given, of the rest, in his preface to the volume. I shall add nothing to what I have already said on this subject * ; but only tell the occasion and manner of his writing it. Mr. St. John, after-

* Vol. I. pag. 50.

wards

wards Lord Bolingbroke, happening to pay a morning visit to Dryden, whom he always respected *, found him in an unusual agitation of spirits, even to a trembling. On enquiring the cause, " I have been up all night, replied the old bard; my musical friends made me promise to write them an ode for their feast of St. Cæcilia: I have been so struck with the subject which occurred to me, that I could not leave it till I had completed it; here it is, finished at one sitting." And immediately he shewed him this ode, which places the British lyric poetry above that of any other nation. This anecdote, as true as it is curious, was imparted by lord Bolingbroke to POPE, by POPE to Mr. Gilbert West, by him to the ingenious friend who communicated it to me *. The rapidity, and yet the perspi-

* See his verses to Dryden, prefixed to the translation of Virgil. Lord Bolingbroke assured POPE, that Dryden often declared to him, that he got more from the Spanish critics alone, than from the Italian, French, and all other critics put together. This appears strange. Lord Bolingbroke learned Spanish in less than three weeks.

† Richard Berenger, Esq;

84 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

cuity of the thoughts, the glow and the expressiveness of the images, those certain marks of the first sketch of a master, conspire to corroborate the truth of the fact.

THE TRANSLATION of the *first book of Statius*, is the next piece that belongs to this Section. It was in his childhood only, that he could make choice of so injudicious a writer. It were to be wished that no youth of genius were suffered ever to look into Statius*, Lucan, Claudian, or Seneca the tragedian; authors, who by their forced conceits, by their violent metaphors, by their swelling epithets, by their want of a just decorum, have a strong tendency to dazzle, and to mislead inexperienced minds, and tastes unformed, from the true relish of possibility, propriety, simplicity and nature. Statius had undoubt-

* Writers of this stamp are always on the stretch. They disdain the natural. They are perpetually grasping at the vast, the wonderful, and the terrible. "Καὶ ἰνατοὶ αὐτῶν πρὸς αὐγὰς ἀναισθητοῦς, ἐν τῇ φοβερῇ κατ' ὀλίγον ὑπονοεῖ πρὸς τὸ ἀναισθητοῦ.—Κακοὶ δὲ οἱ λόγοι, καὶ ἐπὶ σωματικῶν καὶ λογικῶν, δι' ἡλικίας καὶ ἀναλκας, καὶ μὴ ποτὲ περιστάντες ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸ ἀναισθητοῦ· οὐδὲν γὰρ, φασί, ἐνδοτερεῖν ὑπερβαίνει." Longinus, περὶ ὁμοιωτῶν τμ. γ. Sect. iii.

edly

edly invention, ability and spirit; but his images are gigantic and outrageous, and his sentiments tortured and hyperbolical. It can hardly, I think, be doubted, but that Juvenal intended a severe satire on him, in these well known lines which have been commonly interpreted as a panegyric.

Curritur ad vocem *jucundam* et carmen *amicæ*
 Thebaidos, *lætam* fecit cum Statius *urbem*,
Promisitque diem; tanta *dulcedine captos*
Afficit ille animos, tantaque libidine vulgi
Auditur: sed, cum fregit subsellia versu,
 Esurit.——

In these verses are many expressions, here marked with italics, which seem to hint obliquely, that Statius was the favourite poet of the vulgar, who were easily captivated with a wild and inartificial tale, and with an empty magnificence of numbers; the noisy roughness of which, may be particularly alluded to in the expression, *fregit subsellia versu*. One cannot forbear reflecting on the short duration of a true taste in poetry, among the Romans.

From

86 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

From the time of Lucretius, to that of Statius, was no more than about one hundred and forty-seven years; and if I might venture to pronounce so rigorous a sentence, I would say, that the Romans can boast of but eight poets who are unexceptionably excellent; namely, **TERENCE, LUCRETIVS, CATULLUS, VIRGIL, HORACE, TIBULLUS, PROPERTIVS, PHÆDRUS.** These only can be called legitimate models of just thinking and writing. Succeeding authors, as it happens in all countries, resolving to be original and new, and to avoid the imputation of copying, became distorted and unnatural: by endeavouring to open a new path, they deserted simplicity and truth; weary of common and obvious beauties, they must needs hunt for remote and artificial decorations. Thus was it that the age of Demetrius Phalerëus succeeded that of Demosthenes, and the false relish of Tiberius's court, the chaste one of Augustus. Among the various causes however that have been assigned, why poetry and the arts have more eminently flourished in some particular ages and nations,

than

than in others, few have been satisfactory and adequate. What solid reason can we give why the Romans, who so happily imitated the Greeks in many respects, and breathed a truly tragic spirit, could yet never excel in tragedy, though so fond of theatrical spectacles? Or why the Greeks, so fruitful in every species of poetry, yet never produced but one great epic poet? While on the other hand, modern Italy, can shew two or three illustrious epic writers, yet has no Sophocles, Euripides, or Menander. And France, without having formed a single Epopœa, has carried dramatic poetry to so high a pitch of perfection in Corneille, Racine, and Moliere.

For a confirmation of the foregoing remark on Statius, and for a proof of the strength and spirit of POPE's translation, I shall select the following passage.

He sends a monster horrible and fell,

Begot by furies in the depth of hell.

The pest a virgin's face and bosom wears;

High on a crown a rising snake appears,

Guards her black front, and hisses in her hairs:

}
About

88 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

About the realm she walks her dreadful round
When night with fable wings o'er spreads the ground ;
Devours young babes before their parent's eyes,
And feeds and thrives on public miseries *.

Oedipus, in Statius, behaves with the fury of
a blustering bully ; in Sophocles †, with that
patient submission, and pathetic remorse, which
are suited to his lamentable condition.

Art thou a father, unregarding Jove !
And sleeps thy thunder in the realms above ?
Thou, fury, then, some lasting curse entail,
Which o'er their children's children shall prevail ;
Place on their heads that crown distain'd with gore,
Which these dire hands from my slain father tore ‡.

OVID is also another writer of a bad taste,
on whom POPE employed some of his youth-
ful hours ; in translating the stories of Dryope,
and Pomona. Were it not for the useful my-

* B. I. ver. 701.

† See his address to the furies in the *Oedipus Coloneus* of
Sophocles, beginning at the words, *Ω μοιραῖαι δεινότητες*, at verse
85, down to verse 117. And afterwards, when he becomes
more particularly acquainted with the unnatural cruelty of his
sons, yet his resentment is more temperate. See verse 433 down
to verse 472, of the same tragedy.

thological

thological knowledge they contain, the works of Ovid ought not to be so diligently read. The puerilities and affectations with which they abound, are too well known to be here insisted on. I chuse rather to account for Ovid's falling into so blameable a species of writing, in the words of a sensible critic*; who

* Francisæi Vavassoris de Epigrammate Liber. Parisiis 1672. Pag. 47, edit. 8vo.

About this time it became fashionable among the wits at Button's, the mob of gentlemen that wrote with ease, to translate Ovid. Their united performances were published in form by Garth, with a preface written in a flowing and lively style, but full of strange opinions. He declares, that none of the classic poets had the talent of expressing himself with more force and perspicuity than Ovid; that the Fiat of the Hebrew law-giver is not more sublime than the *Jussit et extendi campos*, of the latin poet; that he excels in the propriety of his similes and epithets, the perspicuity of his allegories, and the instructive excellence of his morals. Above all, he commends him for his unforced transitions, and for the ease with which he slides into some new circumstance, without any violation of the unity of the story; the texture, says he, is so artful that it may be compared to the work of his own *Arachne*, where the shade dies so gradually, and the light revives so imperceptibly, that it is hard to tell where the one ceases and the other begins. But it is remarkable that *Quintilian* thought very differently on this subject, and the admirers of Ovid would do well to consider his opinion. "*Illæ vero frigida et puerilis est in scholis affectatio, ut ipse transitus efficiat aliquam utique sententiam, et hujus velut præstigia plausum*

N "

petat:

after he has censured, what he calls, the *pigmenta*, the *lascivias*, and *auscupia sermonum* of PATERCULUS, of VALERIUS MAXIMUS, of PLINY the naturalist, and PLINY the consul, of FLORUS, and TACITUS, proceeds as follows: "Apud Ovidium, cum in Heroidum epistolis, tum vero præcipue in libris Metamorphoseon, deprehendunt qui ista curant, multa solerter et acute dicta. Sed advertit nemo, quod sciam, unde exorta hæc ei præter cæteros libido, et quæ causa festivitatis novæ, et prioribus inusitatæ poetis, esse potuerit. Natus Ovidius eodem, quo Cicero mortuus, anno, in hæc incidit tempora, ut ita dicam, declamatoria, hoc est, ea, quibus inductus primum est, et valere cæpit, et in honore esse; strictior is habitus et comptior scrip-

petat: ut Ovidius lascivire in Metamorphosi solet, quem tamen excusare necessitas potest, res diversissimas in speciem unius corporis colligentem." Garth was a most amiable, and benevolent man. It was said of him, that "no Physician knew his Art more, nor his Trade less." Pope told Mr. Richardson, "that there was hardly an alteration, of the innumerable, that were made throughout every edition of the Dispensary, that was not for the better." The vivacity of his conversation made him an universal favourite both with Whigs and Tories, when party-rage ran high.

turæ

turæ ; ubi color sententiarum, plurimi ac densi sensus, et qui cum quodam lumine terminarentur, non tarda nec inerti structura. Sic enim nove loqui cæptum est de novo genere loquendi. Itaque ejus adolescentia iis maxime studiis ac disciplinis declamitandi traducta, exercitaque tunc, cum Portio Latroni et Arellio Fusco rhetoribus daret operam, cumque sese non ad forum, a quo laboris fuga abhorrebat, sed ad poeticam, in quam erat natura propensior, contulisset : detulit una secum figuram hanc et formam sermonis, cui assueverat aliquandiu, et institutum jam oratione soluta morem retinuit in versibus."

WE are now advanced, through many digressions, that I would hope are not wholly impertinent, to POPE'S IMITATIONS of *Seven English Poets*, some of which were done at fourteen or fifteen years old. His early bent to poetry has been already taken notice of in the first volume *, to which the following anecdote must be added, which I lately re-

* Pag. 77.

92 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

ceived from one of his intimate friends. " I wrote things, said POPE, I am ashamed to say how soon ; part of my epic poem ALCANDER, when about twelve. The scene of it lay at Rhodes, and some of the neighbouring islands ; and the poem opened under the water, with a description of the court of Neptune. That couplet on the circulation of the blood, which I afterwards inserted in the Dunciad,

" As man's meanders, to the vital spring

" Roll all their tides, then back their circles bring,

was originally in this poem, word for word."

THE first of these Imitations is of Chaucer ; as it paints neither characters nor manners like his original, as it is the only piece of our author's works that is loose and indecent, and as therefore I wish it had been omitted in the present edition, I shall speak no more of it.

THE Imitation of Spenser is the second ; it is a description of an alley of fishwomen. He that was unacquainted with Spenser, and

was

was to form his ideas of the turn and manner of his genius from this piece, would undoubtedly suppose that he abounded in filthy images, and excelled in describing the lower scenes of life. But the characteristics of this sweet and amiable allegorical poet, are, not only strong and circumstantial imagery, but tender and pathetic feeling, a most melodious flow of versification, and a certain pleasing melancholy in his sentiments, the constant companion of an elegant taste, that casts a delicacy and grace over all his compositions. To imitate Spenser on a subject that does not hold of the pathos, is not giving a true representation of him, for he seems to be more awake and alive to all the softnesses of nature, than almost any writer I can recollect. There is an assemblage of disgusting and disagreeable sounds, in the following stanza of POPE, which one is almost tempted to think, if it were possible, had been contrived as a contrast, or rather burlesque, of a most exquisite stanza in the FAERY QUEEN.

The

94 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

The snappish cur, (the passengers annoy)
 Close at my heel with yelping treble flies ;
 The whim'ring girl, and hoarser-screaming boy,
 Join to the yelping treble, shrilling cries ;
 The scolding quean to louder notes doth rise,
 And her full pipes those shrilling cries confound ;
 To her full pipes the grunting hog replies ;
 The grunting hogs alarm the neighbours round,
 And curs, girls, boys, in the deep base are drown'd.

The very turn of these numbers, have the
 closest resemblance with the following, which
 are of themselves a complete concert of the
 most delicious music.

The joyous birds shrouded in chearful shade,
 Their notes unto the voice attempted sweet ;
 Th' angelical, soft trembling voices made
 To th' instruments divine response meet ;
 The silver-sounding instruments did meet
 With the base murmure of the water's fall ;
 The water's fall with difference discreet,
 Now soft, now loud unto the wind did call ;
 The gentle warbling wind low answered to all *.

These images, one would have thought, were
 peculiarly calculated to have struck the fancy

* Book II. Canto 12. Stanza 71.

of our young imitator with so much admiration, as not to have suffered him to make a kind of travesty of them.

The next stanza of POPE represents some allegorical figures, of which his original was so fond.

Hard by a sty, beneath a roof of thatch
Dwelt OBLOQUY, who in her early days,
Baskets of fish at Billingsgate did watch,
Cod, whiting, oyster, mackarel, sprat or plaice:
There learn'd she speech from tongues that never cease.
SLANDER beside her, like a magpie chatters,
With ENVY (spitting cat) dread foe to peace;
Like a curs'd cur, MALICE before her clatters,
And vexing every wight, tears cloaths and all to
tatters.

But these personages of Obloquy, Slander, Envy and Malice, are not marked with any distinct attributes, they are not those living figures *, whose attitudes and behaviour Spenser

* Mr. Hume is of opinion, that the perusal of Spenser becomes tedious to almost all his readers. " This effect, says he, [History of England, pag. 738.] of which every one is conscious, is usually ascribed to the change of manners; but manners have more changed since Homer's age, and yet that poet remains

96 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

has minutely drawn with so much clearness and truth, that we behold them with our eyes, as plainly as we do on the cieling of the banquetting-house. For in truth the pencil of Spenser is as powerful as that of Rubens; his brother allegorist; which two artists resembled each other in many respects, but Spenser had more grace, and was as warm a colourist. Among a multitude of objects delineated with the utmost force *, which we might select

remains still the favourite of every reader of taste and judgment. Homer copied true natural manners, which, however rough and uncultivated, will always form an agreeable and pleasing picture; but the pencil of the English poet was employed in drawing the affectations, and conceits, and fopperies of chivalry, which appear ridiculous as soon as they lose the recommendation of the mode."

* Whence it came to pass that Spenser did not give his poem the due simplicity, coherence and unity of a legitimate *Epopea*, the reader may find in Mr. Hurd's entertaining letter to Mr. Mason, on the Marks of imitation, pag. 19, and in Observations on the Faery Queen, pag. 2, 3, 4. "How happened it, says Mr. Hurd, that Sir Philip Sydney in his *Arcadia*, and afterwards Spenser in his *Faery Queen*, observed so unnatural a conduct in those works; in which the story proceeds as it were by snatches, and with continual interruptions? How was the good sense of those writers, so conversant besides in the best models of antiquity, seduced into

on this occasion, let us stop a moment and take one attentive look at the allegorical figures that rise to our view in the following lines;

By that way's side there sat infernal Pain,
And fast beside him sat tumultuous Strife;
The one, in hand an iron whip did strain,
The other brandished a bloody knife,
And both did gnash their teeth, and both did threaten life *.

22.

But gnawing Jealousie, out of their sight
Sitting alone his bitter lips did bite;

this preposterous method? The answer, no doubt is, that they were copying the design, or disorder rather of Ariosto, the favourite poet of that time."

A defence of Ariosto was lately published in *Lettere Familiari e Critiche* de Vincenzo Martinelli, two of which are addressed to lord Charlemont on this subject, pag. 290. Something curious on this head may be found in a remarkable letter of Bernardo Tasso, the father of Torquato, in which there is this passage. "Ne sò io s' Aristotele nascesse a questa età, et vedesse il vaghissimo poema dell'Ariosto, conoscendo la forza de l' uso, et vedendo che tanto diletta, come l' esperienza ci dimostra, mutasse opinione, et consentisse che si potesse far poema heroico di piu attione: Con la sua mirabil dottrina, et giudicio, dandogli nova norma, et prescrivuendogli novi leggi."

Lettere di XIII. Huomini Illustri da Tomaso Porcacchi.
In Venetia, 1584. Libro XVII. pag. 422.

* Book II. c. 7. 21.

Vol. II.

O

And

98 **ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS**

And trembling Feare still to and fro did flie,
And found no place where safe he shroud him might.
Lamenting Sorrow did in darknesse lie,
And Shame his ugly face did hide from living eye.

To shew the richness of his fancy, he has given us another picture of Jealousy, conceived with equal strength in a succeeding book *.

Into that cave he creepes, and thenceforth there
Resolv'd to build his baleful mansion
In dreary darkness, and continual feare
Of that rock's fall; which ever and anon
Threats with huge ruin him to fall upon,
That he dare never sleep, but that one eye
Still ope he keeps for that occasion;
Ne ever rests he in tranquillity,

The roaring billows beat his bowre so boisterously †.

Here all is in life and motion; here we behold the true Poet or MAKER; this is crea-

* Lord Somers was passionately fond of the Fairy Queen; it was his favourite work; in the last picture which he sate for to Sir Godfrey Kneller, he desired to be painted with a Spenser in his hand. I was informed of this circumstance by the Somers of the present age; I mean by a person who unites a profound knowledge of the laws and constitution of his country, with the truest taste of polite literature.—Need I, after this, mention the Speaker of the House of Commons?

† Book iii. c. 11.

tion;

tion; it is here, "might we cry out to Spenser," it is here that you display to us, that you make us feel the sure effects of genuine poetry, *ὅταν ἂ λέγῃς, ὑπ' ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ παθὸς βλέπειν δοκῇς, καὶ ὑπ' ὧν τίθῃς τοὺς ἀκροῦσι.* Longinus *.

It has been fashionable of late to imitate Spenser, but the likeness of most of these copies, hath consisted rather in using a few of his ancient expressions, than in catching his real manner. Some however have been executed with happiness, and with attention to that simplicity, that tenderness of sentiment, and those little touches of nature, that constitute Spenser's character. I have a peculiar pleasure in mentioning two of them, † The SCHOOL-MISTRESS, by Mr. Shenstone, and the EDUCATION of ACHILLES, by Mr. Beddingfield. To these must be added that exquisite piece of wild and romantic imagery, Thompson's Castle of Indolence; the first

* Περὶ οὗ. Sect. 15.

† Doddsley's Miscellanies, Vol. I. pag. 247, and Vol. III. pag. 119.

canto of which in particular, is marvellously pleasing, and the stanzas have a greater flow and freedom than his blank-verse.

POPE has * imitated WALLER in the third place, and has done it with elegance, especially in the verses on a fan of his own design, for he designed with dexterity and taste. The application of the story of Cephalus and Procris is as ingenious as Waller's Phœbus and Daphne. Waller abounds, perhaps to excess, in allusions to mythology and the ancient classics. The French, as may be imagined, complain that he is too learned for the ladies. The following twelve lines contain three allusions, delicate indeed, but some may deem them to be too far-fetched, too much crowded, and not obvious to the Lady to whom they were addressed, on her singing a song of his composing.

* Speaking of his imitations, POPE said to a friend, "I had once a design of giving a taste of all the Greek poets; I would have translated a hymn of Homer, an ode of Pindar, an idyllium of Theocritus, &c. so that I would have exhibited a general view of their poesie, throughout its different ages."

That

Chloris, yourself you so excell,
When you vouchsafe to breathe my thought,
That like a spirit with this spell
Of my own teaching I am caught.
That eagle's fate and mine are one,
Which on the shaft that made him die,
Espy'd a feather of his own
Wherewith he wont to soar so high.
Had Echo with so sweet a grace,
Narcissus' loud complaints return'd,
Not for reflexion of his face,
But of his voice, the boy had burn'd.

Here * is matter enough compressed together for Voiture to have spun out into fifty lines. If I was to name my favorite among Waller's smaller pieces, it should be his apology for having loved before. He begins by saying that "they who never had been used to the surprising juice of the grape, render up their reason to the first delicious cup:" this is sufficiently gallant, but what he adds has much of the sublime, and is like a thought of Milton's.

* Spenser and Waller were POPE's great favourites, in the order they are named, in his early reading.

To man that was i' th' evening made,
 Stars gave the first delight;
 Admiring in the gloomy shade,
 Those little drops of light.
 Then at Aurora, whose fair hand
 Remov'd them from the skies,
 He gazing tow'rs the East did stand,
 She entertain'd his eyes.
 But when the bright sun did appear,
 All those he 'gan despise;
 His wonder was determin'd there,
 And could no higher rise.

Which of the French writers has produced
 any thing at once so gallant and so lofty? The
 English versification was much smoothed by
 Waller; who used to own that he derived
 the harmony of his numbers from Fairfax's
 Tasso, who well-vowelled his lines, though
 Sandys was a melodious versifier, and Spenser
 has perhaps more variety of music than either
 of them. A poet who addresses his pieces to

* "Even little poems, said POPE, should be written by a
 plan. This method is evident in Tibullus, and Ovid's elegies,
 and almost all the pieces of the ancients. A poem on a slight
 subject requires the greater care to make it considerable enough
 to be read."

living

living characters, and confines himself to the subjects of his own times, like this courtly author, bids fairer to become popular, than he that is employed in the higher scenes of poetry, which are more remote from common manners. It may be remarked lastly of Waller, that there is no passion in his love verses, and that one elegy of Tibullus, excels a volume of the most refined panegyric.

THE next imitation is of COWLEY, in two pieces, on a garden, and on weeping, in which POPE has properly enough, in conformity to his original, extorted some moral, or darted forth some witticism on every object he mentions : It is not enough to say that the laurels sheltered the fountains from the heat of the day, but this idea must be accompanied with a conceit.

—— Daphne, now a tree, as once a maid,
Still from Apollo vindicates her shade.

The

The flowers that grow on the water-side could not be sufficiently described without saying, that

The pale Narcissus on the bank, in vain,
Transformed, gazes on himself again.

In the lines on a lady weeping, you might expect a touching picture of beauty in distress; you will be disappointed. Wit on the present occasion is to be preferred to tenderness; The babe in her eye is said to resemble Phaeton so much,

That heav'n the threat'ned world to spare,
Thought fit to drown him in her tears:
Else might th' ambitious nymph aspire,
To set, like him, the world on fire.

Let not this strained affectation of striving to be witty upon all occasions, be thought exaggerated, or a caricatura of Cowley. It is painful to censure a writer of so amiable a mind, such integrity of manners, and such a sweetness of temper. His fancy was brilliant, strong, and sprightly; but his taste false and

and unclassical, even though he had much learning. In his latin compositions, his six books on plants, where the subject might have led him to a contrary practice, he imitates Martial rather than Virgil, and has given us more Epigrams than Descriptions. I do not remember to have seen it observed, that Cowley had a most happy talent of imitating the easy manner of Horace's epistolary writings; I must therefore insert a specimen of this, his excellence.

Ergo iterum versus ? dices. O Vane ! quid ergo
 Morbum ejurasti toties, tibi qui insidet altis,
 Non evellendus, vi vel ratione, medullis ?
 Numne poetarum (merito dices) ut amantum
 Derisum ridere deum perjuria censes ?
 Parcius hæc, sodes, neve inclementibus urge
 Infelicem hominem dictis ; nam fata trahunt me
 Magna reluctanter, et velut equum in vincla minacem.
 Helleborum sumpsi, fateor, pulchreque videbar
 Purgatus morbi ; sed Luna potentior herbis
 Insanire iterum jubet, et sibi vendicat ægrum.

There is another epistle also, well worthy pe-

Vol. II.

P

rusal

106 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

rusal, to his friend Mat. Clifford *, at the end of the same volume. POPE, in one of his imitations of Horace, has exhibited the real character of Cowley, with delicacy and candour.

Who now reads Cowley ? if he pleases yet,
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit ;
Forgot his epic, nay Pindaric art,
But still I love the language of his heart.

His prose works give us the most amiable idea both of his abilities and his heart. His Pindaric odes cannot be perused with common patience by a lover of antiquity. He that would see Pindar's manner truly imitated, may read Masters's noble and pathetic ode on the Crucifixion ; and he that wants to be convinced that these reflections on Cowley are not too severe, may read also his epigrammatic version of it.

* Settle was assisted in writing the Anti-Achitophel by Clifford, and others the best wits of that time, who combined against Dryden.

† Another line likewise of Pope exactly characterises him.

The *penfave* Cowley's moral lay. — Vol. VI. p. 37.

His

Ἡ ἐκ οὐρανοῦ ὀλοπορφύρεον

Στυλβοντ' ἢ φλογι

Σιδωνίης αἵμα, ἀλ-

-λ, αἵματι ταῖς οὐρανοῖς —

Dost thou not see thy prince in purple clad all o'er,
Not purple brought from the Sidonian shore?
But made at home with richer gore. COWLEY.

• Ἀνοιγ', ανοιγ'

Πύλας οὐρανοῦ

Καὶ πηγὰς βλεφάρων

Ἀνοίξαι, ψαλαξέ, δινέ γαίαν —

Open, oh! open wide the fountains of thine eyes,
And let them call
Their stock of moisture forth where e'er it lies,
For this will ask it all.
'Twould all alas! too little be,
Though thy salt tears came from a sea.

His general preface; his discourse concerning Cromwell; his essays on liberty, on obscurity, on agriculture, on greatness, and on himself, are full of pleasing and virtuous sentiments, expressed without any affectation, so that he appears to be one of the best prose writers of his time.

* Compare Cowley's ode on presenting his book to the Bodleian library, with one of Milton on the same subject, Ad Johannem Rouscium, 1646, written in the true spirit of the ancient Lyrics, and an excellent imitation of Pindar. One allusion to Euripides of whom Milton is known to have been so fond, I cannot omit.

108 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

COWLEY being early disgusted with the perplexities and vanities of a court life, had a strong desire to enjoy the milder pleasures of solitude and retirement; he therefore escaped from the tumults of London, to a little house at Wandsworth; but finding that place too near the metropolis, he left it for Richmond, and at last settled at Chertsey. He seems to have thought that the swains of Surry, had the innocence of those of Sydney's Arcadia;

*Æternorum operum custos fidelis,
Quæstorque gazæ nobilioris,
Quam cui præfuit Ion,
Clarus Erechtheides,
Opulenta dei per templa parentis,
Fulvosque tripodas, donaque Delphica,
Ion Actæa genitus Creusa.*

Nothing can more strongly characterize the different manner and turn of these two writers, than the pieces in question. It is remarkable, that Milton ends his ode with a kind of prophecy importing, that however he may be at present traduced, yet posterity will applaud his works.

*At ULTIMI Nepotes,
SERIQUE POSTERI,
Judicia rebus ÆQUIORA forsitan
Adhibebunt INTEGRO sinu,
Tum, l'vore sepulto,
Si quid MEREMUR, SERA POSTERITAS sciet.*

but

but the perverseness and debauchery of his own workmen soon undeceived him, with whom, it is said, he was sometimes so far provoked, as even to be betrayed into an oath. His income was about three hundred pounds a year. Towards the latter part of his life, he shewed an aversion to the company of women, and would often leave the room if any happened to enter it whilst he was present, but still he retained a sincere affection for Leonora. His death was occasioned by a singular accident * ; he paid a visit on foot with his friend

* There is something remarkable in the circumstances that occasioned the deaths of three others of our poets.

OTWAY had an intimate friend who was murdered in the street. One may guess at his sorrow, who has so feelingly described true affection in his *Venice Preserved*. He pursued the murderer on foot who fled to France, as far as Dover, where he was seized with a fever, occasioned by the fatigue, which afterwards carried him to his grave in London.

Sir JOHN SUCKLING was robbed by his Valet-de-Chambre; the moment he discovered it, he clapped on his boots in a passionate hurry, and perceived not a large rusty nail that was concealed at the bottom which pierced his heel, and brought on a mortification.

LEE had been some time confined for lunacy, to a very low diet, but one night he escaped from his physician, and drank so immoderately, that he fell down in the Strand, was run over by a Hackney coach, and killed on the spot.

Sprat

110 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Sprat to a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Chertsey, which they prolonged till midnight. On their return home they mistook their way, and were obliged to pass the whole night exposed under a hedge, where Cowley caught a severe cold, attended with a fever, that terminated in his death.

THE verses on Silence are a sensible imitation of the Earl of Rochester's on Nothing; which piece, together with his Satire on Man from Boileau, and the tenth Satire of Horace, are the only pieces of this profligate nobleman, which modesty or common sense will allow any man to read. Rochester had great energy in his thoughts and diction, and though the ancient satirists often use great liberty in their expressions; yet, as the ingenious historian * observes, "their freedom no more resembles the licence of Rochester, than the nakedness of an Indian does that of a common prostitute."

* Hume's History of Great-Britain. Vol. II. pag. 434.

AND GENIUS OF POPE. III

POPE in this imitation has discovered a fund of solid sense, and just observation upon vice and folly, that are very remarkable in a person so extremely young as he was, at the time he composed it. I believe on a fair comparison with Rochester's lines, it will be found, that although the turn of the satire be copied, yet it is excelled. That Rochester should write a satire on Man, I am not surprized; it is the business of the Libertine to degrade his species, and debase the dignity of human nature, and thereby destroy the most efficacious incitements to lovely and laudable actions: but that a writer of Boileau's purity of manners, should represent his kind in the dark and disagreeable colours he has done, with all the malignity of a discontented HOBBIIST, is a lamentable perversion of fine talents, and is a real injury to society. It is a fact worthy the attention of those who study the history of learning, that the gross licentiousness and applauded debauchery of Charles the Second's court, proved almost as pernicious to the progress of polite literature and the fine arts that began

112 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

began to revive after the Grand Rebellion, as the gloomy superstition, the absurd cant, and formal hypocrisy that disgraced this nation, during the usurpation of Cromwell *.

ARTEMISIA and PHRYNE are two characters in the manner of the Earl of Dorset, an elegant writer, and amiable man, equally noted for the severity of his satire, and the sweetness of his manners, and who gave the fairest proof that these two qualities are by no means incompatible. The greatest wits, says Addison, I have ever conversed with, were persons of the best tempers. Dorset possessed the rare secret of uniting energy with ease, in his striking compositions.

* Lord Bolingbroke used to relate, that his Great Grandfather Ireton, and Fleetwood, being one day engaged in a private drinking party with Cromwell, and wanting to uncork a bottle, they could not find their bottle-screw, which was fallen under the table. Just at that instant, an officer entered to inform the protector, that a deputation from the presbyterian ministers attended without. "Tell them, says Cromwell, with a countenance instantly composed, that I am retired, that I cannot be disturbed, for I am *seeking the Lord*," and turning afterwards to his companions, he added, "These scoundrels think we are *seeking the Lord*, and we are only *looking for our bottle screw*."

His

His verses to Mr. Edward Howard, to Sir Thomas St. Serfe, his epilogue to the Tartuffe, his song written at sea in the first Dutch war, his ballad on knotting, and on Lewis XIV. may be named as examples of this happy talent, and as confutations of a sentiment of the judicious M. de Montesquieu, who in his noble chapter on the English nation, speaks thus of our writers. “ La societe nous apprend a sentir les ridicules ; la retraite nous rend plus propres a sentir les vices. LEUR ECRITS SATYRIQUES seroient sanglans, et l’on verroit bien des JUVENALS chez eux avant d’avoir trouve un HORACE.”

THE DESCRIPTION of the LIFE of a *Country Parson* is a lively imitation of Swift*, and

* See a Pipe of Tobacco, p. 282. vol. 2. Doddsley’s Miscell. where Mr. Hawkins Brown has imitated six later English poets with success, viz. Swift, POPE, Thompson, Young, Phillips, Cibber. Some of these writers thinking themselves burlesqued, are said to have been mortified. But POPE observed on the occasion, “ Brown is an excellent copyist, and those who take his imitations amiss, are much in the wrong ; they are very strongly mannered, and few perhaps could write so well if they were not so.”—In POPE’s imitation of the sixth epistle of

114 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

1 full of humour. The point of the likeness consists in describing the objects as they really exist in life, without heightening or enlarging them, and without adding any imaginary circumstances. In this way of writing, Swift excelled; witness his description of a morning in the city, of a city shower, of the house of Baucis and Philemon, and the verses on his own death. These are of the same species with the piece before us. In this also consists the chief beauty of Gay's *Trivia*, a subject Swift desired him to write upon, and for which he furnished him with many hints. The character of Swift has been scrutinized in so many late writings, that it is superfluous to enter upon it, especially as from many materials ju-

Horace, there were two remarkable lines, the second of which was thought to contain a heavy anti-climax.

Grac'd as thou art with all the power of words,
Known to the Courts, the Commons and the Lords.

The unexpected flatness and familiarity of the last line was thus ridiculed by Mr. Brown with much humour.

Persuasion tips his tongue whene'er he talks,
And—*he has chambers in the King's-Bench walks.*

diciously

diciously melted down and blended together, Dr. Hawksworth has set before the public, so complete a figure of him. I cannot however forbear to mention a fact lately published at Geneva, in the additions to Voltaire's works. He affirms, " that the famous Tale of a Tub is an imitation of the old story of the three invisible rings, which a father bequeathed to his three children. These three rings were the Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan religions. It is moreover, an imitation of the history of Mero and Enegu, by Fontenelle. Mero was the anagram of Rome, and Enegu of Geneva. These two sisters claimed the succession to the throne of their fathers. Mero reigned first, Fontenelle represents her as a sorceress or juggler who could convey away bread, and perform acts of conjuration with dead bodies: This is precisely the Lord Peter of Swift, who presents a piece of bread to his two brothers, and says to them, ' This, my good friends, is excellent Burgundy, these partridges have an admirable flavour.' The same lord Peter in Swift, performs throughout the very part that

Mero

Mero plays in Fontenelle. Thus all is imitation. The idea of the Persian letters is taken from the Turkish Spy. Boiardo has imitated Pulci, Ariosto has imitated Boiardo. The geniuses, apparently most original, borrow from each other *.

I SHALL conclude this section with a story, which POPE himself related, because it is characteristic of his old friend, and I shall give it in the very words which POPE used, when he told it.—“ Dr. Swift has an odd blunt way
 “ that is mistaken by strangers for ill-nature ;
 “ it is so odd that there is no describing † it
 “ but by facts. I’ll tell you one, the first that
 “ comes into my head. One evening Gay and
 “ I went to see him. On our coming in,
 “ Hey-day, gentlemen, says the Dean, what
 “ can be the meaning of this visit? How came
 “ you to leave all the great lords you are so

* Oeuvres de Voltaire a Geneve. Tom. 4 pag. 223. 1756.

† The late archbishop of Armagh, happening to object one day in Swift’s company to an expression of POPE, as not being the purest English, Swift answered with his usual roughness—
 “ I could never get the blockhead to study his grammar.”

“ fond

“ fond of, to come hither to see a poor scurvey
 “ Dean?—Because we would rather see you
 “ than any of them.—Ay, any one that did
 “ not know you so well as I do, might possibly
 “ believe you; but since you are come I must
 “ get some supper for you I suppose.—No
 “ Doctor we have supped already—Supped
 “ already, that is impossible, why it is not
 “ eight o’clock—Indeed we have—That’s
 “ very strange; but if you had not supped,
 “ I must have got something for you; let me
 “ see, a couple of lobsters would have done
 “ very well, two shillings; tarts, a shilling:
 “ but you will drink a glass of wine with me,
 “ though you supped so much before your
 “ time only to spare my pocket.—No, we
 “ had rather talk with you, than drink with
 “ you.—But if you had supped with me, as
 “ in all reason you ought to have done, you
 “ must then have drank with me.—A bottle
 “ of wine two shillings—two and two are
 “ four, and one is five; just two and sixpence
 “ a-piece; there Pope, there’s half a crown
 “ for you, and there’s another for you, Sir;
 “ for

118 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

“ for I won’t save any thing by you, I am deter-
 “ mined. This was all said and done with
 “ his usual seriousness on such occasions: And
 “ in spite of every thing we could say to the
 “ contrary, he actually obliged us to take the
 “ money.”



SECT. IX.

Of the ESSAY on MAN.

IF it be a true observation, that for a poet to write happily and well, he must have seen and felt what he describes, and must draw from living models alone; and if modern times, from their luxury and refinement, afford not manners that will bear to be described; it will then follow, that those species of poetry bid fairest to succeed at present, which treat of things, not men; which deliver doctrines, not display events. Of this
 fort

fort is didactic and descriptive poetry. Accordingly the moderns have produced many excellent pieces of this kind. We may mention the Syphilis of Fracastorius, the Silkworms and Chefs of Vida, the Ambra of Politian, the Agriculture of Alamanni, the Art of Poetry of Boileau, the Gardens of Rapin, the Cyder of Phillips, the Chase of Somerville, the Pleasures of Imagination, the Art of preserving Health, the Fleece, the Religion of Racine the younger, the elegant Latin poem of Brown on the Immortality of the Soul, the Latin poem of STAY, and the philosophical poem before us.

THE ESSAY ON MAN is as close a piece of argument, admitting its principles, as perhaps can be found in verse. POPE informs us in his FIRST preface, "that he chose this epistolary way of writing, notwithstanding his subject was high, and of dignity, because of its being mixed with argument which of its nature approacheth to prose." He has not wandered into any useless digressions, has employed

ployed no fictions, no tale or story, and has relied chiefly on the poetry of his stile, for the purpose of interesting his readers. His stile is concise and figurative, forcible and elegant. He has many metaphors and images, artfully interspersed in the driest passages, which stood most in need of such ornaments. Nevertheless there are too many lines, in this performance, plain and prosaic. The meaner the subject is of a preceptive poem, the more striking appears the art of the poet : It is even of use to chuse a low subject. In this respect Virgil had the advantage over Lucretius ; the latter with all his vigour and sublimity of genius, could hardly satisfy and come up to the grandeur of his theme. POPE labours under the same case. If any beauty in this Essay be uncommonly transcendent and peculiar, it is, BREVITY OF DICTION ; which, in a few instances, and those pardonable, have occasioned obscurity. It is hardly to be imagined how much sense, how much thinking, how much observation on human life, is condensed together in a small compass. He was so accus-

tomed

tomed to confine his thoughts in rhyme, that he tells us, he could express them more shortly this way, than in prose itself. On its first publication, POPE did not own it, and it was given by the public to Lord Paget, Dr. Young, Dr. Desaguliers, and others. Even Swift seems to have been deceived : There is a remarkable passage in one of his letters. " I confess I did never imagine you were so deep in morals, or that so many new and excellent rules could be produced so advantageously and agreeably in that science, from any one head. I confess in some places I was forced to read twice ; I believe I told you before what the Duke of D—— said to me on that occasion, how a judge here who knows you, told him, that on the first reading those essays, he was much pleased, but found some lines a little dark : On the second, most of them cleared up, and his pleasure increased : On the third, he had no doubt remaining, and then he admired the whole *."

* Letters, vol. IX. pag. 140.

THE subject of this Essay is a vindication of providence, in which the poet proposes to prove, that of all possible systems, infinite wisdom has formed the best: That in such a system, coherence, union, subordination, are necessary; and if so, that appearances of evil, both moral and natural, are also necessary and unavoidable; That the seeming defects and blemishes in the universe, conspire to its general beauty; That as all parts in an animal are not eyes, and as in a city, comedy, or picture, all ranks, characters, and colours, are not equal or alike; even so, excesses, and contrary qualities, contribute to the proportion and harmony of the universal system; That it is not strange, that we should not be able to discover perfection and order in every instance; because, in an infinity of things mutually relative, a mind which sees not infinitely, can see nothing fully. This doctrine was inculcated by Plato and the Stoics, but more amply and particularly by the later Platonists, and by Antoninus and Simplicius. In illustrating his subject, POPE has been deeply indebted

to the Theodiceé of Leibnitz, to Archbishop King's Origin of Evil, and to the Moralists of Lord Shaftesbury, more than to the philosophers abovementioned. The late Lord Bathurst repeatedly assured me, that he had read the whole scheme of the Essay on Man, in the hand-writing of Bolingbroke, and drawn up in a series of propositions, which Pope was to versify and illustrate. In doing which, our poet, it must be confessed, left several passages so expressed, as to be favourable to fatalism and necessity, notwithstanding all the pains that can be taken, and the turns that can be given to those passages, to place them on the side of religion, and make them coincide with the fundamental doctrines of revelation.

- I. Awake *, my St. John ! leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of kings ;
Let us (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us, and to die)

* Johnson begins a poem thus

Wake ! friend, from forth thy lethargy——

124 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man ;
A mighty maze ! but not without a plan.

EPIST. I. V. 1.

THIS opening is awful, and commands the attention of the reader. The word *awake* has peculiar force, and obliquely alludes to his noble friend's leaving his political, for philosophical pursuits. May I venture to observe, that the metaphors in the succeeding lines, drawn from the field sports of setting and shooting, seem below the dignity of the subject; especially,

EYE nature's walks, SHOOT folly as it flies,
And CATCH the manners living as they RISE.

2. But vindicate the ways of god to man.

This line is taken from Milton;

And justify the ways of god to man*.

POPE seems to have hinted, by this allusion to the *Paradise Lost*, that he intended his poem for a defence of providence, as well as

* *Paradise Lost*, b. i. ver. 26.

Milton;

Milton : but he took a very different method in pursuing that end.

3. But of this frame the bearings, and the ties *,
The strong connections, nice dependencies,
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Look'd thro' ? Or can a part contain the whole ?

“ Imagine only some person entirely a stranger to navigation, and ignorant of the nature of the sea or waters, how great his astonishment would be, when finding himself on board some vessel anchoring at sea, remote from all land-prospect, whilst it was yet a calm, he viewed the ponderous machine firm and motionless in the midst of the smooth ocean, and considered it's foundations beneath, together with it's cordage, masts, and sails above. How easily would he see the Whole one regular structure, all things depending on one another ; the uses of the rooms below, the lodgements, and the conveniencies of men and stores ? But being ignorant of the

* Τα μὲν πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ἅπλῃ δι' οὐρανὸν, ἢ συμφωνία καὶ ἀρμονία
οὐρανοῦ.

Plotinus.

intent

126. ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

intent or design of all above, would he pronounce the masts and cordage to be useless and cumbersome, and for this reason condemn the frame, and despise the architect? O my friend! let us not thus betray our ignorance; but consider where we are, and in what an universe. Think of the many parts of the vast machine, in which we have so little insight, and of which it is impossible we should know the ends and uses: when instead of seeing to the highest pendants, we see only some lower deck, and are in this dark case of flesh, confined even to the hold and meanest station of the vessel*.” I have in-

* *Characteristics*, vol. ii, pag. 188. edit. 12mo.—There is a close resemblance in the following lines with another passage of Shaftesbury’s *Moralists*.

What would this man? Now upward will he soar,
And little less than angel, would be more;
Now looking downwards, just as griev’d appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.

“Ask not merely, why man is naked, why unhoofed, why slower footed than the beasts: Ask, why he has not wings also for the air, fins for the water, and so on: that he might take possession of each element, and reign in all. Not so, said I, neither; this would be to rate him high indeed! As if he were
by

ferted this passage at length, because it is a noble and poetical illustration of the foregoing lines, as well as of many other passages in this Essay.

- 4 Presumptuous man ! the reason would'st thou find,
 Why form'd so weak, so little and so blind ?
 First if thou can'st the harder reason guess,
 Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less *.

VOLTAIRE, in the late additions to his works, has the following remarkable words.
 " I own it flatters me to see that POPE
 " has fallen upon the very same sentiment
 " which I had entertained many years ago."
 " Vous vous étonnez que Dieu ait fait l'homme si borné, si ignorant, si peu hereux. Que ne vous étonnez-vous, qu'il ne l'ait pas fait plus borné, plus ignorant, & plus malheureux ? Quand un Francais & un Anglais pensent de meme, il faut bien qu'ils ayent raison †."

by nature, lord of all, which is more than I could willingly allow. 'Tis enough replied he, that this is yielded. For if we allow once, a *subordination* in his case, if nature herself be not for man, but man for nature; then must man, by his good leave, submit to the elements of nature, and not the elements to him." Vol. ii. pag. 196, ut supra.

* V. 34. † Oeuvres de Voltaire. Tom. iv. pag. 227.

128 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

5. The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to day,
 Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
 Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flowery food,
 And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood*.

The tenderness of this striking image, and particularly the circumstance in the last line, has an artful effect in alleviating the dryness in the argumentative parts of the Essay, and interesting the reader.

6. The soul uneasy, and confin'd from home,
 Rests and expatiates in a life to come †.

IN former editions it used to be printed *at home*; but this expression seeming to exclude a future existence, it was altered to *from home*, not only with great injury to the harmony of the line, but perhaps also, to the reasoning of the context.

7. Lo the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
 Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
 His soul proud science never taught to stray,
 Far as the solar walk or milky way;
 Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
 Behind the cloud-topp'd hill an humbler heav'n:

* Ver. 81.

† Ver. 97.

Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the watry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To BE contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company. *

POPE has indulged himself in but few digressions in this piece; this is one of the most poetical. Representations of undisguised nature and artless innocence always amuse and delight. The simple notions which uncivilized nations entertain of a future state, are many of them beautifully romantic, and some of the best subjects for poetry. It has been questioned whether the circumstance of the dog, although striking at the first view, is introduced with propriety, as it is known that the animal is not a native of America. The notion of seeing God in clouds, and hearing him in the wind, cannot be enough applauded.

* Ver. 99.

8. From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
 When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
 Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep. *

I quote these lines as an example of energy of style, and of POPE's manner of compressing together many images, without confusion, and without superfluous epithets. Substantives and verbs are the sinews of language.

9. If plagues or earthquakes break not heav'ns design,
 Why then a Borgia or a Catiline? †

"ALL ills arise from the order of the universe, which is absolutely perfect. Would you wish to distrust so divine an order, for the sake of your own particular interest? What if the ills I suffer arise from malice or oppression? But the vices and imperfections of men are also comprehended in the order of the universe.

If plagues &c.

Let this be allowed, and my own vices will be also a part of the same order."—— Such is the commentary of the academist on these famous lines ‡.

* Ver. 142.

† Ver. 156.

‡ Hume's Essays, quarto, pag. 106.

10. The general order, *since the whole began*,
Is kept in nature, and is kept in man *.

How this opinion is reconcileable with the orthodox doctrine of the lapsed condition of man, I have not yet been informed.

11. Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n,
T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er
To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore? †

“ If by the help of such microscopical eyes, if I may so call them, a man could penetrate farther than ordinary into the secret composition and radical texture of bodies, he would not make any great advantage by the change; if such an acute sight would not serve to conduct him to the market and exchange, if he could not see things he was to avoid at a convenient distance, nor distinguish things he had to do with by those sensible qualities others do.” ‡

* Ver. 171.

† Ver. 193.

‡ Locke's Essay on Human Understanding, vol. I. pag. 256.

132 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

12. If nature thunder'd in his opening ears,
And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish that heav'n had left him still
The whispering zephyr, and the purling rill? *

It is justly objected, that the argument required an instance drawn from real sound, and not from the imaginary music of the spheres. Locke's illustration of this doctrine, is not only proper but poetical †. "If our sense of hearing were but one thousand times quicker than it is, how would a perpetual noise distract us; and we should in the quietest retirement, be less able to sleep or meditate, than in the middle of a sea-fight."

13. From the green myriads in the *peopled* grass—
The mole's *dim* curtain, and the lynx's beam;
Of smell the *headlong* lioness between,
And hound sagacious on the *tainted* green:
The spider's touch how exquisitely fine,
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line. §

THESE lines are selected as admirable patterns of forcible diction. The peculiar and

* Ver. 201.

† Essay on Human Understanding, vol. I. pag. 235.

§ Ver. 210.

discriminating

discriminating expressiveness of the epithets distinguished above by italics will be particularly regarded. Perhaps we have no image in the language, more lively than that of the last verse. "To live along the line" is equally bold and beautiful. In this part of this Epistle the poet seems to have remarkably laboured his style, which abounds in various figures, and is much elevated. POPE has practised the great secret of Virgil's art, which was to discover the very single epithet that precisely suited each occasion.

14. Without this just gradation, could they be
 Subjected, these to those, or all to thee?
 The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
 Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one? *

"Such then is the admirable distribution of nature, her adapting and adjusting not only the stuff or matter to the shape and form, and even the shape itself and form, to the circumstance, place, element, or region; but also the affections, appetites, sensations, mutually to

* Ver. 229.

each other, as well as the matter, form, action, and all besides; all managed for the best, with perfect frugality and just reserve: profuse to none, but bountiful to all: never employing in one thing more than enough; but with exact œconomy retrenching the superfluous, and adding force to what is principal in every thing. And is not thought and reason principal in man? Would we have no reserve for these? No saving for this part of his engine *?"

15. Above, how high, progressive life may go!
 Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
 Vast chain of being! which from God began,
 Natures ætherial, human, angel, man,
 Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
 No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,
 From thee to nothing. §

“THAT there should be more species of intelligent creatures above us, than there are of sensible and material below us, is probable to me from hence; that in all the visible corporeal world, we see no chasms, or gaps. All quite

* The Moralists, vol. ii. pag. 199.

§. Ver. 235.

down from us, the descent is by easy steps, and a continued series of things, that in each remove differ very little from one another. — And when we consider the infinite power and wisdom of the maker, we have reason to think, that it is suitable to the magnificent harmony of the universe, and the great design and infinite goodness of the architect, that the species of creatures should also, by gentle degrees, descend to us downwards: which if it be probable, we have reason then to be persuaded, that there are far more species of creatures above us, than there are beneath; we being in degrees of perfection, much more remote from the infinite being of God, than we are from the lowest state of being, and that which approaches nearest to nothing *.”

16. From nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike, †

THIS doctrine is precisely the same with that of the philosophical emperor. “ Πρῶται γὰρ

* Locke's Essay on Human Understanding, vol. ii, pag. 49.

† Ver. 245.

136 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

το ὁλοκληρον, εαν και ὅτι ἐν διακοψῃ τῆς συναν-
φειας και συνεχειας, ὡς περ τῶν μοριῶν, ἔτω δὲ
και τῶν αἰτιῶν· διακοπτεῖς δὲ ἔσον ἐπὶ σοὶ ὅταν
δυσαρεστῆς, και τροπον τινα ἀναιρῆς *.”

17. Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains,
The great directing MIND of ALL ordains. §

HERE again we must transcribe another no-
ble sentiment of the same lofty writer. “Ὅποιον
ἐστὶ τὸ λεγόμενον, ὅτι συνετάξεν ὁ Ἀσκληπιοῦς
τῷ τῷ ἰππασίᾳ, ἢ φικροδυσίᾳ, ἢ ἀνοποδισίᾳ·
τοῦτῳ ἐστὶ και τὸ, συνετάξεν τῷ τῷ ἰππῶν ἔλῳ
φύσις νοσῶν, ἢ πηρώσῳ, ἢ ἀποβολῇ, ἢ ἄλλο τι
τῶν τοιούτων· και γὰρ ἐκεῖ τὸ συνετάξεν, τοῦτῳ
τι σημαίνει, ἐτάξε αὐτὸ πρὸς τῷ τῷ, ὡς καταλ-
λῆλον εἰς ὑγίειαν· και ἐνταῦθα τὸ συμβαῖνον
ἐκαστῷ τετακῆαι πρὸς αὐτὸ καταλλῆλον εἰς
τὴν ἱμαρμηνήν.—Ὅλως γὰρ ἀρμονία ἐστὶ μία †.”

18. All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is and God the soul;
That chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in th' ætherial frame;

* M. Antoninus, Lib. v. S. 8.

§ Ver. 265.

† M. Antoninus, Lib. v. S. 8.

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
 Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees ;
 Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent ;
 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
 As full as perfect in a hair as heart ;
 As full as perfect in vile man that mourns,
 As the rapt seraph that adores and burns :
 To him no high, no low, no great, no small ;
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all. *

WHILST I am transcribing this exalted description of the omnipresence of the Deity, I feel myself almost tempted to retract an assertion in the beginning of this work, that there is nothing transcendently sublime in POPE. These lines have all the energy and harmony that can be given to rhyme. They bear so marvellous a similitude to the old Orphic verses quoted in the valuable treatise *Περὶ Κοσμοῦ*, that I cannot forbear introducing them, as they are curious and sublime.

Ζεὺς πρῶτος γινετο, Ζεὺς ὕψιστος ἀρχικεραυνός .

Ζεὺς πατὴρ, Ζεὺς μύσση . Διὸς δ' ἐκ παντὸς εἰσυχλαί .

* Ver. 267.

138 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Ζεὺς πύθμη γαίης τε καὶ ὕρατος ἀσπερότης:
 Ζεὺς ἀρσση γαίης, Ζεὺς ἀμύρολος ἐπὶ τοῦ νομή.
 Ζεὺς πνοὴ παλίων, Ζεὺς ἀκαμάων πυρός ορμη.
 Ζεὺς ποίη εἰζα, Ζεὺς ἥλιος, ἡδὲ σιλητη.
 Ζεὺς βασιλευς, Ζεὺς ἀρκος ἀπαίων ἀρχικραυτος.
 Πάσις γὰρ κρυψας αὐτὸς φῶς ἐς πολυγηδης,
 Εἰς ἰσθης κρυπτης ἀνιενγαίω μερμερα εἰζων. *

NOR have we a less example of sublimity in the three preceding lines, which describe the universal confusion that must ensue, upon any alteration made in the entire and coherent plan of the creation.

Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
 Planets and suns rush lawless thro' the sky;
 Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
 Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
 Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
 And nature tremble to the throne of God. †

It is very observable that these noble lines were added after the first edition. It is a pleasing amusement to trace out the alterations that a

* Ἀριστοτέλης Περὶ Κοσμοῦ, pag. 52. edit. Glasguae, 1745.

† Ver. 251;

great writer gradually makes in his works.
Many other parts of this epistle have been
judiciously amended and improved. At first
it ran,

How instinct varies! what a hog may want
Compar'd with thine, half-reas'ning elephant.

And again ;

What the advantage, if his finer eyes
Study a mite, not comprehend the skies.

Which lines at present stand thus,

How instinct varies in the grovling swine,
Compar'd, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine.
Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n,
T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n.

Formerly it stood,

No self-confounding faculties to share ;
No senses stronger than his brain can bear.

At present,

No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.

It appeared at first,

Expatriate free o'er all this scene of man
A mighty maze ! of walks without a plan.

We read at present,

A mighty maze ! but not without a plan.

19. Submit. — In this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear :
Safe in the hand of one disposing pow'r
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour. *

I cannot resist the pleasure of illustrating this sentiment in the words of a writer, whose friendship I esteem to be no small happiness and honour. " Teach us each to regard himself, but as a part of this great whole ; a part which for its welfare we are as patiently to resign, as we resign a single limb for the welfare of our whole body. Let our life be a continued scene of acquiescence and of gratitude, for what we enjoy ; of acquiescence, in what we suffer ; as both can only be referable to that concatenated order of events, which cannot

* Ver. 285.

but

but be best, as being by thee approved
and chosen *."

20. All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good. †

THIS is the doctrine that reigns throughout
the lofty hymn of Cleanthes the Stoic, particu-
larly in these beautiful and masculine verses.

Ουδε τι γιγνέσθαι έργον επί χθονι σε δίχα Δαιμον,
Ουδε κατ' αἰθέριοι θειοι πολλοι, ὅτ' ἐπὶ ποίῳ,
Πλην ὅποσα εἴςθ' οἱ κακοὶ σφείεσθ' ἀναισ,
Ἀλλὰ σὺ καὶ τὰ περισσὰ ἐπιστάσαι ἀξία θειοι,
Καὶ κοσμεῖν τὰ ἀκοσμά· καὶ εἰ φίλα σοι φίλα εἰσιν.
Ὡ δὲ γὰρ εἰς ἐν ἀπάντῃ συνεγμοκας ἐσθλὰ κακοῖσιν,
Ὡσθ' εἴνα γιγνεσθαι πάντων λόγον αἰεὶ εὐλῶν δ.

21. Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;
Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;

* Three Treatises by James Harris, Esq; pag. 231.

† Ver. 289.

§. Hymn. apud Hen. Steph. pag. 49.

Created half to rise, and half to fall ;
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all ;
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd :
 The glory, jest and riddle of the world ! ‡

It was remarked long ago in the Adventurer *, that these reflexions were minutely copied from Pascal, who says ; “ What a chimera then is man ! what a confused chaos ! what a subject of contradiction ! a professed judge of all things, and yet a feeble worm of the earth ! The great depositary and guardian of truth, and yet a mere huddle of uncertainty ! the glory and the scandal of the universe.”

22. Superior beings when of late they saw
 A mortal man unfold all natures law,
 Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,
 And shew'd a Newton as we shew an ape. †

THE author of the letter on the Marks of imitation, is induced to think, from the singularity of this sentiment, that the great poet had his eye on Plato ; *ὅτι ἀνθρώπων ὁ σοφώτατος πρὸς θεὸν πιθικὸς φανείηαι*. But I am more in-

‡ Epist. ii. v. 13.

* No. 63.

† Ver. 34.

clined to think that POPE borrowed it from a passage in the zodiac of Palingenius, which the abovementioned Adventurer has also quoted, and which POPE, who was a reader of the poets of Palingenius's age, was more likely to fall upon, than on this thought of Plato.

*Simia coelicolūm risusque jocusque deorum est;
Tunc homo, quum temerè ingenio confidit, et audet
Abdita naturæ scrutari, arcanaque divūm.*

23. Trace science then, with modesty thy guide ;
First strip off all her equipage of pride ;
Deduct what is but vanity, or dress,
Or learning's luxury, or idleness ;
Or tricks to shew the stretch of human brain,
Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain ;
Expunge the whole, or lop th' excreſcent parts,
Of all our vices of created arts. *

THE abuses of learning are enumerated with brevity and elegance, in these few lines. It was a favourite subject with our author; and it is said, he intended to have written four epistles on it, wherein he would have treated

144 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

of the extent and limits of human reason, of arts and sciences useful and attainable, of the different capacities of different men, of the knowledge of the world, and of wit. Such censures, even of the most unimportant parts of literature, should not, however, be carried too far; and a sensible writer observes, that there is not indeed any part of knowledge which can be called entirely uselefs.* The most abstracted parts of mathematics, and the knowledge of mythological history, or antient allegories, have their own pleasures not inferior to the more gay entertainments of painting, music, or architecture; and it is for the advantage of mankind that some are found, who have a taste for these studies. The only fault lies, in letting any of those inferior tastes, engross the whole man to the exclusion of the nobler pursuits of virtue and humanity*." We may here apply an elegant observation of Tully, who says in his Brutus, "*Credo, sed Atheniensium quoque plus interfuit firma tecta*

* Hutcheson's Nature and Conduct of the Passions. pag. 174.

in domiciliis habere, quam Minervæ signum ex ebores pulcherrimum : tamen ego me Phidiam esse mallet quam vel optimum fabrum lignarium; quare non quantum quisque proficit, sed quanti quisque sit, ponderandum est : præsertim cum pauci pingere egregiè possint aut fingere, operarii autem aut bajuli deesse non possint."

24. Passions, tho' selfish, if their means be fair,
Lift under reason and deserve her care ;
Those, *that imparted*, court a nobler aim,
Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name, *

WE find an † obscurity in these lines, arising from the use of the participle imparted ;

* Ver. 97.

† When I am writing, says Fontenelle, I often stop and ask ; " Do I myself understand this sentence ? " And yet, Fontenelle, whom the French accuse of introducing the abrupt, affected style, is frequently obscure. " Non minus autem cavenda erit, says Quintilian, quæ nimium corripientes omnia sequitur, obscuritas : satiusque est aliquid narrationi superesse, quam deesse. Nam cum supervacua cum tædio dicuntur, necessaria cum periculo subtrahuntur."

Institut. Orat. Lib. iv. C. 2.

Happy is he who can unite brevity with perspicuity. — It is but of one writer that Quintilian says, Idem lætus ac pressus, tum copiâ, tum brevitate mirabilis. Lib. x. C. 1.

146 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

a mode of speaking of which POPE was fond, studious as he was of brevity, and which often betrayed him into the same fault : as the use of the case absolute does in the following lines ;

Present to grasp, and future still to find,
The *whole employ* of body and of mind. *

25. In lazy apathy let Stoics boast
Their virtue fix'd ! 'tis fix'd as in a frost ;
Contracted all, retiring to the breast ;
The strength of mind is exercise, not rest. †

PERHAPS a stronger example cannot be found, of taking notions upon trust without any examination, than the universal censure that has been passed upon the Stoics, as if they strenuously inculcated a total insensibility with respect to passion. He that would be convinced that this trite accusation is ill-grounded, may consult the notes Mr. Harris has added to his third treatise ‡. There he will find the genuine doctrines of the Stoics examined with accuracy and sagacity, in a learned deduction

* Ver. 125.

† Ver. 103.

‡ From note pag. 325, to pag. 331.

of passages, from all the best writers of that school; the sum of which quotations, in the nervous language of that critic, appears to be this; "That the Stoics, in their character of their virtuous man, included rational desire, aversion, and exultation; included love, and parental affection; friendship, and a general charity or benevolence to all mankind: that they considered it as a duty, arising from our very nature, not to neglect the welfare of public society, but to be ever ready, according to our rank, to act either the magistrate or the private citizen: that their apathy was no more than a freedom from perturbation, from irrational and excessive agitations of the soul: and consequently that the strange apathy, commonly laid to their charge, and in the demolishing of which there have been so many triumphs, was an imaginary apathy, for which they were no way accountable."

26. LOVE, HOPE, and JOY, fair PLEASURE's smiling train;
HATE, FEAR, and GRIEF, the family of PAIN.

148 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

THIS beautiful group of allegorical personages, so strongly contrasted, how do they act? The prosopopeia is unfortunately dropped, and the metaphor changed immediately in the succeeding lines.

These mix'd with art, and to due bounds confin'd,
Make, and maintain the balance of the mind. *

27. On different senses different objects strike. †

A didactic poet who has happily indulged himself in bolder flights of enthusiasm, supported by a more figurative style, than our author used, has thus nobly illustrated this very doctrine.

——— Different minds

Incline to different objects : one pursues,
The vast alone, the wonderful, the wild ;
Another sighs for harmony, and grace,
And gentlest beauty. Hence when lightning fires
The arch of heav'n, and thunders rock the ground ;
When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
And ocean groaning from the lowest bed,
Heaves his tempestuous billows to the sky ;
Amid the mighty uproar, while below

* Ver. 120.

† Ver. 127.

The

The nations tremble, Shakespear looks abroad
From some high cliff, superior, and enjoys
The elemental war. But Waller longs
All on the margin of some flow'ry stream
To spread his careless limbs, amid the cool
Of plantane shades. —

WE have here a striking example of that poetic spirit, that harmonious, and varied verification and that strength of imagery, which conspire to excite our admiration of this beautiful poem *.

28. Proud of an easy conquest all along,
She but removes weak passions for the strong. †

THIS is from the Duke de la Rochefoucault. Whenever we get the better of our passions it is more owing to their weakness than our strength. And again, there is in the heart of man a perpetual succession of passions, in-somuch that the ruin of one is always the rise of another ‡.

* The Pleasures of Imagination, Book iii. v. 546.

† Ver. 157.

‡ Max. X.

29. Let pow'r, or knowledge, gold or glory, please,
Or oft more strong than all, the love of ease. §

AN acute observation plainly taken from Rochefoucault. " 'Tis a mistake to believe that none but the violent passions, such as ambition and love, are able to triumph over the other passions. Laziness, as languid as it is, often gets the mastery of them all, usurps over all the designs and actions of life, and insensibly consumes, and destroys both passions and virtues *."

30. Virtuous and vicious ev'ry man must be,
Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree :
The rogue and fool by fits is fair and wise ;
And ev'n the best, by fits, what they despise. †

A fine reflection, and calculated to subdue that petulant contempt and unmerited aversion men too generally entertain against each other, and which diminish and destroy the social affections ‡. Our emulation says one of the best-natured philosophers, our jealousy or envy,

§ Ver. 170. * cclxvi. Max. † Ver. 233.

‡ Hutcheson's Nature and Conduct of the Passions, p. 190.
should

should be restrained in a great measure, by a constant resolution of bearing always in our minds the lovely side of every character. The compleatly evil are as rare as the perfectly virtuous, there is something amiable almost in every one, as Plato observes in his Phædon.

“Ο ουν αδελφος εαν αδικη εντευθεν αυτο ε λαμβανης, οτι αδικει· αυτη γαρ λαβη εστιν αυτου ε φορητη· αλλ’ εκειθεν μαλλον, οτι αδελφος, οτι συντροφος †.”

THIS charitable doctrine of putting candid constructions on those actions that appear most blameable, nay most detestable and most deformed, is illustrated and enforced with great strength of argument and benevolence by KING in his fifth chapter on the origin of evil; where he endeavours to evince the prevalence of moral good in the world, and teaches us to make due allowances for mens follies and vices.

† Epicteti Enchiridion.

† Many lessons on this useful species of humanity, tending to soften the disgust that arises from a prospect of the absurdity and wickedness of human nature, are to be found in Marcus Antoninus; and many noble Precepts in the New Testament rightly understood have the same tendency, but are delivered with more dignity and force, and demand certainly a deeper attention and more implicit regard.

31. What

152 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

31. What crops of wit, and honesty appear,
From spleen, from obstinacy, hate or fear ? *

Au Cid persecuté Cinna doit sa naissance,
Et peut-estre ta plume aux Censeurs de Pyrrhus
Doit les plus nobles traits dont tu peignis Burrhus. †

32. Heav'n forming each on other to depend,
A master, or a servant, or a friend,
Bids each on other for assistance call,
'Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.
Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
The common interest, or endear the tie.
To these we owe true friendship, love sincere,
Each home-felt joy that life inherits here. §

IT

* Ver. 185.

† Boileau, Epistre vii. a M. Racine, pag. 57.

§ " In rerum systemate vel optimè constituto, debent esse diversa animantium genera superiora, et inferiora, ut locus sit præclaris animi virtutibus ubi se exercent: excluderentur enim commiseratio, beneficentia, liberalitas, fortitudo, æquanimitas, patientia, lenitas, et officia omnia gratuita et immerita, quorum sensus longe est omnium lætissimus, et memoria jucundissima; si nulla esset imbecillitas, nulla indigentia, nulla hominum vitia et errores."

Hutcheson. *Metaphysicæ Synopsis*, cap. ii. pag. 81.
This resembles the doctrine of the old Stoic Chrysippus as he is quoted by Aulus Gellius, lib. vi. cap. 1. " Nullum adeo contrarium sine contrario altero. Quo enim pacto justitiæ sensus esse posset nisi essent injuriæ? Aut quid aliud justitia est quam injustitiæ privatio? Quid item fortitudo intelligi posset nisi

It was an objection constantly urged by the ancient Epicureans, that man could not be the creature of a benevolent being, as he was formed in a state so helpless and infirm: Montagne took it and urged it also. They never considered or perceived that this very infirmity and helplessness were the cause and cement of society; that if men had been perfect and self-sufficient, and had stood in no need of each others assistance, there would have been no occasion for the invention of the arts, and no opportunity for the exertion of the affections. The lines therefore in which Lucretius proposes this objection, are as unphilosophical

nisi ex ignavia oppositione? Quid continentia nisi ex intemperantia? Quo item modo prudentia esset, nisi foret ex contrario imprudentia? ——— “To this purpose the elegant lyric poet.

Who sounds in discord, beauty's reign,
Converts to pleasure ev'ry pain,
Subdues the hostile forms to rest,
And bids the universe be blest.”

“This is that magic divine, which by an efficacy past comprehension, can transform every appearance, the most hideous, into beauty, and exhibit all things fair and good to thee! Essence Increate! who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.” *Three Treatises*, by J. H. pag. 234.

154 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

and inconclusive, as they are highly pathetic and poetical.

*Tum porro puer, ut sævis projectus ab undis
Navita, nudus humi jacet, infans, indigus omni
Vitali auxilio, cum primum in luminis oras
Nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit ;
Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum est,
Cui tantum in vitâ restat transire malorum. †*

THERE is a passage in the Moralists which I cannot forbear thinking POPE had in his eye, and which I must not therefore omit, as it serves to illustrate and confirm so many parts of the Essay on Man ; I shall therefore give it at length without apology.

“ THE young of most other kinds, are instantly helpful to themselves, sensible, vigorous, know how to shun danger, and seek their good : A human infant is of all the most helpless, weak, infirm. And wherefore should it not have been so ordered ? Where is the loss in such a species ? Or what is man the worse for that defect, amidst such large supplies ?

† Lib. v. ver. 223.

Does

Does not * this defect engage him the more strongly to society, and force him to own that he is purposely, and not by accident, made rational and sociable; and can no otherwise increase or subsist, than in that social intercourse and community which is his natural state? Is not both conjugal affection, and natural affection to parents, duty to magistrates, love of a common city, community, or country, with the other duties and social parts of life, deduced from hence, and founded in these very wants? What can be happier than such a deficiency, as it is the occasion of so much good? What better than a want so abundantly made up, and answered by so many enjoyments? Now if there are still to be found among mankind, such as even in the midst of these wants seem not ashamed to af-

* A longer care man's helpless kind demands;
That longer care contracts more lasting bands.

Ep. iii. v. 131.

And again;

And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise,
That graft benevolence on charities.

Ep. iii. v. 137.

156 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

fect a right of independency, and deny themselves to be by nature sociable; where would their shame have been, had nature otherwise supplied these wants? What duty or obligation had been ever thought of? What respect or reverence of parents, magistrates, their country, or their kind? Would not their full and self-sufficient state more strongly have determined them to throw off nature, and deny the ends and author of their creation?" *

31. And pride bestow'd on all a common friend. †

THE observation is from Rochefoucault; "Nature, who so wisely has fitted the organs of our body to make us happy, seems likewise to have bestowed pride on us, on purpose, as it were, to save us the pain of knowing our imperfections." ‡

Un sot en écrivant fait tout avec plaisir.

Il n'a point en ses vers l'embarras de choisir,

* The Moralists, pag. 201.

† Ver. 272.

‡ Maxim. 36.

Et

Et toujours amoureux de ce qu' il vient d' ecrire,
 Ravi d' etonnement en soi-meme il s' admire.
 Mais un esprit sublime en vain veut s' elever,
 A ce degre parfait qu' il tache de trouver ;
 Et toujours mecontent de ce qu' il vient de faire
 Il plaist a tout le monde, & ne scauroit se plaire.

WHEN Boileau read these words to his friend
 Moliere to whom they are address'd, the latter,
 squeezing his hand with earnestness, said ——
 “ This is one of the best truths you have ever
 uttered. I am not one of those sublime ge-
 niuses of whom you speak ; but such as I am,
 I must declare I have never wrote any thing
 in my life, with which I have been thoroughly
 satisfied *.”

34. See matter next, with various life endu'd,
 Press to one centre still, the gen'ral good.
 See dying vegetables life sustain,
 See life dissolving vegetate again :
 All forms that perish other forms supply,
 (By turns we catch the vital breath and die)
 Like bubbles on the sea of matter born,
 They rise, they break, and to that sea return. †

* Sat. 2. 85.

† Ep. 3. v. 13.

158 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

POPE has again copied Shaftesbury so closely in this passage, as to use almost his very words. "Thus in the several orders of terrestrial forms, a resignation is required, a sacrifice and mutual yielding of natures one to another. The vegetables by their death, sustain the animals; and the animal bodies dissolved, enrich the earth, and raise again the vegetable world. The numerous insects are reduced by the superior kinds of birds and beasts: And these again are checked by man; who in his turn submits to other natures, and resigns his form a sacrifice in common to the rest of things. And if in natures so little exalted or pre-eminent above each other, the sacrifice of interest can appear so just; how much more reasonably may all inferior natures be subjected to the superior nature of the world!" *

35. Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good,
 Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?
 Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
 For him as kindly spread the flowery lawn:
 Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?
 Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings †.

THE

* The Moralists, pag. 130.

† Ver. 27.

THE poetry of these lines is as beautiful, as the philosophy is solid. "They who imagine that all things in this world were made for the immediate use of man alone, run themselves into inextricable difficulties. Man indeed is the head of this lower part of the creation, and perhaps it was designed to be absolutely under his command. But that all things here tend directly to his own use, is, I think, neither easy nor necessary to be proved. Some manifestly serve for the food and support of others, whose souls may be necessary to prepare and preserve their bodies for that purpose, and may at the same time be happy in a consciousness of their own existence. 'Tis probable they are intended to promote each others good reciprocally : Nay, man himself contributes to the happiness, and * betters the condition of the brutes in several respects, by cultivating and improving the ground, by watch-

- * That very life his learned hunger craves,
He saves from famine, from the savage saves ;
Nay, feasts the animal he dooms his feast,
And till he ends the being makes it blest.

Ep. iii. v. 63

ing the seasons, by protecting and providing for them, when they are unable to protect and provide for themselves." These are the words of Dr. Law, in his learned Commentary on King's Origin of Evil, first published in Latin, 1701, a work of penetration and close reasoning; which, it is remarkable, Bayle had never read, but only some extracts from it, when he first wrote his famous article of the Paulicians, in his Dictionary, where he has artfully employed all that force and acuteness of argument, which he certainly possessed, in promoting the gloomy and uncomfortable scheme of Scepticism or Manichæism.

36. And reason raise o'er instinct as you can,
In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis man.*

There is a fine observation of Montesquieu†, concerning the condition of brutes. Les

* Ep. iii. 97.

† We ought not to be blind to the faults of this fine writer, whatever applause he deserves in general. But it must be confessed, that his style is too short, abrupt, and epigrammatic; he tells us himself, he was fond of Lucius Florus; and he believed too credulously, and laid too great a stress upon, the relations of voyage-writers and travellers; as indeed did Locke,

betes,

betes, n' ont point les supremes avantages que nous avons ; elles en ont que nous n' avons pas. Elles n' ont point nos esperances, mais elles n' ont pas nos craintes ; elles subissent comme nous la mort, mais c' est sans la connoître ; la plupart meme se conservent mieux que nous, & ne font pas un aussi mauvais usage de leurs passions."

37. Who taught the nations of the field and wood
To shun their poison, and to chuse their food ?
Prescient, the tides or tempests to withstand,
Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand ? *

THIS passage is highly finished ; such objects are more suited to the nature of poetry than abstract ideas. Every verb and epithet has here a descriptive force. We find more imagery from these lines to the end of the epistle, than in any other parts of this Essay. The origin of the connexions in social life, the account of the state of nature, the rise and effects of superstition and tyranny, and the re-

* Ver. 99.

storation of true religion and just government, all these ought to be mentioned as passages that deserve high applause, may as some of the most exalted pieces of English poetry.

38. Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade. *

LUCRETIVS, agreeably to his uncomfortable system, has presented us with a different, and more horrid picture of this state of nature. The calamitous condition of man is exhibited by images of much energy, and wildness of fancy.

———— Sæcla ferarum

Infestam miseris faciebant sæpe quietem :
Ejectique domo fugiebant faxea tecta
Setigeri suis adventu, validque Leonis,
Atque intempestâ cedebant nocte paventes
Hospitibus sævis intrata cubilia fronde.

HE represents afterwards some of these wretched mortals mangled by wild beasts, and running distracted with pain through the woods, with their wounds undressed and putrifying :

Ver. 152.

At

At quos effugium servârat, corpore adesto,
 Posterius tremulas super ulcera tetra tenentes
 Palmas, horriferis accibant vocibus Orcum ;
 Donicum eos vita privârunt vermina sæva,
 Expertes opis, ignaros quid volnera vellent. *

Pain is forcibly expressed by the action described in the second line, and by the epithet *tremulas*.

39. The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,
 Unbrib'd, *unbloody*, stood the blameless priest. †

THE effect of alliteration is here felt by the reader. But at what period of time could this be justly said, if we consider the very early institution of sacrifice, according to the scripture-account of this venerable rite.

40. Ah ! how unlike the man of times to come !
 Of half that live the butcher and the tomb ;
 Who, foe to nature, hears the gen'ral groan,
 Murders their species, and betrays his own. ‡

OVID, on the same topic, has nothing so manly and emphatical. " Hears the general

* Lib. v. ver. 991. † Ep. iii. 156. ‡ Ep. iii. 161.

“groan.”, is nobly expressed, and the circumstance of *betraying* his own species, is an unexpected and striking addition to the foregoing sentiment. Thomson has enlarged on this doctrine, with that tenderness and humanity for which he was so justly beloved, in his *Spring*, at verse one hundred and thirty. Our poet ascribes the violence of the passions to the use of animal food.

But just disease to luxury succeeds,
And every death its own avenger breeds *.

41. Thus then to man the voice of nature spake,
“Go from the creatures thy instructions take;
“Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
“Learn from the beasts the physic of the field †.

THE *prosopopœia* is magnificent, and the occasion important, no less than the origin of the arts of life. NATURE is personified also by Lucretius, and introduced speaking with suitable majesty and elevation; she is chiding her foolish and ungrateful children for their vain and impious discontent.

* Ver. 165.

† Ep. 3. ver. 171.

Quid tibi tantopere 'ſt, mortalis, quod nimis ægris
 Luſtibus indulges? quid mortem congenis, ac ſies?—
 Aufer abhinc lacrymas, barathro et compeſce querelas.

THERE is an authoritative air in the brevity of this ſentence, as alſo in the concluding line of her ſpeech; and particularly in the very laſt word. “Æquo animoque, agedum, jam aliis concede: — neceſſe 'ſt ‡.”

42. Thy arts of building from the bee receive,
 Learn of the mole to plow, the worm to weave §.

THE Romans have left us ſcarcely any piece of poetry ſo ſtriking and original, as the beginning and progreſs of arts at the end of the fifth book of Lucretius *. I ſhall at preſent confine myſelf to tranſcribe his beautiful account of the riſe of muſic.

‡ Lib. iii. ver. 975.

§ Ver. 175.

* The Perſians, it is ſaid, diſtinguiſh the different degrees of the ſtrength of fancy in different poets, by calling them, *painters* or *ſculptors*. Lucretius, from the force of his images, ſhould be ranked among the latter. He is, in truth, a **SCULPTOR-POET**. His images have a bold relief.

At liquidas avium voces imitauer ore
 Ante fuit multo, quam lævia carmina cantu
 Concelebrare homines possent, aureisque juvare.
 Et zephyri cava per calamorum sibila primum
 Agrestes docuere cavas inflare acutas.
 Inde minutatim dulcis didicere querelas,
 Tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,
 Avia per nemora, ac sylvas saltusque reperta,
 Per loca pastorum deserta, atque otia dia *.

43. He from the wond'ring furrow call'd the food,
 Taught to command the fire, controul the flood,
 Draw forth the monsters of th' abyss profound,
 Or fetch the aerial eagle to the ground †.

A finer example can perhaps scarce be given of a compact and comprehensive stile. The manner in which the four elements were subdued is comprised in these four lines alone. POPE is here, as Quintilian says of another, *densus et brevis et instans sibi*. There is not an useles word in this passage; there are but three epithets, *wondering*, *profound*, *aerial*; and they are placed precisely with the very substantive that is of most consequence: if

* Lib. v. ver. 1378. † Ver. 219.

there

there had been epithets joined with the other substantives, it would have weakened the nervousness of the sentence. This was a secret of versification POPE well understood, and hath often practised with peculiar success.

44. Who first taught souls enslav'd, and realms undone,
Th' ENORMOUS faith of many made for one *.

“QUAND les sauvages de la Louisiane veulent avoir du fruit, ils coupent l' arbre au piè & cueillent le fruit. Voilà le Gouvernement despotique.” A sentiment worthy of the free spirit of Demosthenes, and an image worthy of the genius of Homer †.

45. Such is the world's great harmony, that springs
From order, union, full consent of things ‡.

* Ver. 241.

† Chapit. 13, De L'Esprit des Loix. These few words are the whole chapter. Woe be to the liberty and science of that country, where this noble and original work is prohibited to be read. Can that author be suspected of irreligion, who in the sixth chapter of his twenty-fourth book has entirely demolished one of the most subtle objections against Christianity, and that too urged by one of the ablest adversaries to our holy religion, M. Bayle; who asserts that a society of men practising the rules of Christianity, in their full rigour, could not long subsist.

‡ Ver. 295.

THERE

THERE is no where to be found so perfect an illustration of this doctrine, that the beauty and concord of the universe arise from contrarieties, as in the short treatise of Aristotle, *περι κοσμου*, which, notwithstanding the different form of its composition, ought to be ascribed to this * philosopher: I shall insert it at length in its sublime original, it being, as it were, a summary or compendium of the philosophy of the poem before us. “*Και τοι γε τις εθαυμασε, πως ποτε ει εκ των εναντιων αρχων συνεστηκεν ο κοσμος, λεγω δε ξηρων τε*

* The learned have been divided in their opinions concerning this piece. Muretus, both the Scaligers, Casaubon, Heinsius, Menage, Vossius, Naude, Alcyonius, and others, will not ascribe it to Aristotle, and lay great stress on a passage of Proclus in his fifth book on the *Timæus*. On the other hand, Demetrius Phalereus, Stobæus, Apuleius, Justin Martyr, Bessarion, Bradwardin, and our own truly learned Bishop Berkley, unanimously give it to Aristotle. This opinion is confirmed by a sensible discourse on the subject, cap. 19. *Petiti Miscell. Observation. Lib. 2.* One of his observations I will not omit. “*Scriptus quippe ad Alexandrum Regem, ut Titulus indicat, ideoque faciliore, quam alii, filo, et aperto orationis plausibilique filo: ut decet Regibus scribentem, ut illi universæ naturalis scientiæ compendium esset. Quo pacto et objectionem a filii discrepantiâ ductam removeo.*”

και ὑγρων, ψυχρων τε και θερμων, ε παλαι δι-
 εφθαλει και απολωλεν· ὡς και ει πολιν τινες θαυ-
 μαζοιεν, ὅπως διαμενη, συνεξηκυιαν εκ των εναν-
 τιων εθνων· Πενητων λεγω, και πλεσιων· νεων,
 και γεροντων, ασθενων, ισχυρων· πονηρων, χρη-
 στων. Αγνωσθι δε, ὅτι τὸτ' ην πολιτικης ὁμοιοιας
 το θαυμασιώτατον· λεγω δε, ὅτι εκ πολλων μιαν,
 και ὁμοιαν ἐξ ανομοιων, ἀποτελει διαθεσιν, ὑπο-
 δεχομενη και πασαν φυσιν, και τυχην· ἰσως δε
 και των εναντίων η φυσis γλιχέται, και εκ τῶν
 ἀποδολει το συμφωνον, εκ εκ των ὁμοιων. ὥσπερ
 ἀμελει το ἄρρεν συνηγαγε προς το θηλυ, και εκ
 ἑκατερον προς το ὁμοφυλον, και την πρωτην ὁμο-
 νοιαν δια των εναντίων συνηψεν, ε δια των ὁμοιων·
 εοικε δε και ἡ τεχνη την φυσιν μιμνημενη, τὸτο
 ποιειν· ζωγραφια μεν γαρ, λευκων τε και μελα-
 νων, ωχρων τε και ερυθρων χρομαίων ἐγκερασαμενη
 φυσεις, τας εικονας τοις προηγυμενοις ἀπέτελεσεν
 συμφωνῃς· μουσικη δε, οξεις ἅμα και βαρεις φθό-
 γης μιξασα, εν διαφοροις φωναῖς μιαν ἀπέτελεσεν
 ἁρμονιαν· γραμματικη δε, εκ φωνηέντων και
 αφωνων γραμματίων κρασιν ποιησαμενη, την ὅλην
 τεχνην ἀπ' αὐτῶν συνεξησάτο· ταυτο δε τὸτο ην

170 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

και το παρὰ τῷ σχολειῶν, λεγόμενον Ἡρακλειτῷ · συναψεις εἴλα, και εἴχι εἴλα · συμφερόμενον, και διαφερόμενον · συναδον, και διαδον · και εκ παντων ἐν και ἐξ ἑνὸς παντα.” It is to be lamented

that the present state of literature in this kingdom, has rendered it necessary, to subjoin a Latin translation of this beautiful and exalted passage, which to be able to read in its original is no vulgar happiness. Take it therefore in the words of Budæus. “*Tametſi extiterunt, qui ſeſe admirari addubitabundi dicerent, qui fieri tandem poſſet, ſi e principiis contrariis mundus conſtitit, ſiccis dico et humidis, frigidis et calidis, ut jam dici non diſſolutus fuerit atque interierit. Perinde quaſi mirari quiſquam debeat, quonam pacto civitas incolumis perduret, quæ e gentibus contrariis compoſita ſit, egenis inquam et divitibus, juvenibus et ſenio conſectis, infirmis et valentibus, pravis atque innocentibus. Ignorantia eſt iſta utique hominum, hoc eſſe in concordia civili non videntium, longe admirabiliſſimum, quod ex multis ipſa unum efficit affectum, et e diſſimilibus ſimilem,*

milem, omnis illa quidem naturæ susceprix et fortunæ. Atque haud scio an etiam contrariorum appetens sit natura : ex eisque consona, non item e similibus conficiat. Sic certe ipsa marem cum fœmina conjunxit, non etiam cum suo horum utrumque sexu. Quin primam etiam concordiam per contraria, non per similia devinxit. Adde quod ars naturæ æmulatrix hoc idem facit. Siquidem pictura, alborum nigrorumque colorum, luteorumque et rubrorum naturas inter se attemperans, effigies rerum efficit consonas exemplaribus. Musica acutis et gravibus sonis, longisque et brevibus una permixtis in diversis vocibus unum ex illis concentum absolutum reddidit. Grammatica, ex elementis vocalibus et mutis inventa temperatura artem omnem literaturæ ex illis compositam reliquit. Hocque nimirum illud est, quod apud Heraclitum legitur (Scotinum ab obscuritate dictum) crispa, inquit, et minime crispa unà vinxeris, consentiens et dissentiens, consonans et dissonans, unum etiam ex omnibus, omniaque ex uno."

172 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

46. O Happiness ! our being's end and aim !

Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content, whate'er thy name *.

HE begins his address to Happiness after the manner of the ancient hymns †, by enumerating the titles and various places of abode of this goddess. He has undoubtedly personified her at the beginning, but he seems to have dropped that idea in the seventh line, where the deity is suddenly transformed into a plant ; from thence this metaphor of a vegetable is carried on distinctly through the eleven succeeding lines, till he suddenly returns to consider Happiness again as a person, in the eighteenth line

And fled from monarchs, St. John, dwells with thee.

For to *fly* and to *dwell*, cannot justly be predicated of the same subject, that immediately

* Ep. iv. ver. 1.

† Παρὰ μὲν τῇ Σαπφῇ καὶ τῷ Αἰσχύλῳ πολλὰ καὶ ἐνδοξοῦσι. Τὴν μὲν γὰρ Ἀρτέμιον ἐκ μυριῶν ὀρέων, μυριῶν δὲ πόλεων, ἑστὶ δὲ ποταμῶν ἀνακαλεῖ. Τῆς δὲ Ἀφροδίτης ἐκ Κυπρῆς, Κνίδος, Συρίας, καὶ πολλὰ ἄλλα ἀνακαλεῖ. Menander Rhetor. de Hymnis.

before

before was described as twining with laurels, and being reaped in harvests.

47. When nature sicken'd, and each gale was death *.

THIS is a verse of a marvellous comprehension and expressiveness. The direfulness of this pestilence is more emphatically set forth in these few words, than in forty such odes as Sprat's on the plague at Athens †.

48. What makes all physical or moral ill?—

There deviates Nature, and here wanders will §.

POPE here accounts for the introduction of moral evil from the abuse of man's free will. This is the scriptural solution of that grand and difficult question, which in vain hath puzzled and bewildered the speculatists of so many ages; ποθεν το κακον. Milton, in one of his smaller and neglected poems, has left us a sublime passage founded on the Christian doc-

* Ver. 108.

† Ταυτ' ἐστὶ μὲν ἐν ἰσχυρῶ, καὶ εὐδαίᾳ, καὶ ἀξιώματι. He
elsewhere commends a writer, on account of his, πυκνότητος,
καὶ σιμνοτήτος. Dionys. Halicarnass. περὶ συνθεσως. τμ. κβ.

§ Ver. 111.

trine

174 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

trine of the Fall, and of the preceding harmony of all things.

That we on earth with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did, till disproportion'd sin
Jarr'd against Nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion sway'd
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good *.

49. ——— A better wou'd you fix?

Then give Humility a coach and six †.

Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
The rest is all but leather or prunella §.

Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,
Yet ne'er looks forward further than his nose ‡.

To sigh for ribbands if thou art so silly,
Mark how they grace Lord Umbra or Sir Billy ||.

In a work of so serious and severe a cast,
in a work of reasoning, in a work of theology

* At a Solemn Music. vol. ii. pag. 38.

† Ver. 17.

§ Ver. 204.

‡ Ver. 223.

|| Ver. 276.

designed

designed to explain the most interesting subject that can employ the mind of man, surely such strokes of levity, of satire, of ridicule, however poignant and witty, are ill placed and disgusting, are violations of that propriety which POPE in general so strictly observed. Lucretius preserves throughout, the dignity he at first assumed; even his sarcasms and irony on the superstitious, have something august, and a noble haughtiness in them; as in particular where he asks how it come to pass that Jupiter sometimes strikes his own temples with his thunderbolts; whether he employs himself in casting them in the deserts for the sake of exercising his arm; and why he hurls them in places where he cannot strike the guilty.

——— Tum fulmina mittat; et ædes
 Sæpe suas disturbet, et in deserta recedens
 Sæviat, exercens telum, quod sæpe nocentes
 Præterit, exanimatque indignos, inque merentes *.

* Lib. ii. ver. 1100.

He

176 . ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

HE has turned the insult into a magnificent image.

50. Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed
From Macedonia's madman to the Swede *.

THE modern Alexander has been thus characterized by the British Juvenal, in lines as nervous and energetic as are to be found in any part of our author.

A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire ;
O'er Love, o'er Fear extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd Lord of Pleasure and of Pain.

And afterwards of his unexpected death.

Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound ?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground ?
His fall was destin'd to a barren strand,
A petty fortress and a dubious hand ;
He left a name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale *.

51. Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake †.

* Doddsley's Miscellanies, vol. iv. The Vanity of Human
Wishes, by Mr. Johnson.

† Ver. 363.

IT is observable that this similitude, originally in Shakespear, hath been used twice more in the writings of our poet; in the Temple of Fame in the four hundred and thirty-sixth line, and in the Dunciad at the four hundred and fifth. This Essay is not decorated with many comparisons; two however ought to be mentioned on account of their aptness and propriety. The first is, where he compares man to the vine, that gains its strength from the embrace it gives: the second is conceived with peculiar felicity; all Nature does not perhaps afford so fit and close an application. It is indeed equally new, philosophical, and poetical.

On their own axis as the planets run,
Yet make at once their circle round the sun;
So two consistent motions * *act* the soul;
And one regards itself, and one the whole †.

52. Come then, my Friend! my Genius! come along;
Oh master of the poet and the song! §

* Should it not be *actuate*, or *act upon*?

† Ep. 3. ver. 301.

§ Ver. 373.

178 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

IN this concluding address of our author to Lord Bolingbroke *, one is at a loss which to admire most, the warmth of his friendship or the warmth of his genius. POPE indeed idolized him : when in company with him, he appeared with all the deference and submission of an affectionate scholar. He used to speak of him as a being of a superior order, that had condescended to visit this lower world ; in particular, when the last comet appeared and approached near the earth, he told some of his acquaintance, " it was sent only to convey Lord Bolingbroke, HOME AGAIN ; just as a stage-coach stops at your door to take up a passenger." A graceful person, a flow of nervous eloquence, a vivid imagination, were the lot of this accomplished nobleman ; but his ambitious views being frustrated in the early part

* Those passages in Bolingbroke's posthumous works, that bear the closest resemblance to the tenets of this Essay are the following. Vol. iv. octavo edition, p. 223 & p. 324 ; p. 94 of vol. 5 ; p. 388 of vol. iv. & 389 ; and p. 49 of vol. iv. p. 5 & 6 of vol. v. p. 17 of vol. v. p. 316 of vol. iv. p. 36 of vol. v. p. 51 of vol. 5. p. 328 of vol. iv. and more particularly than all p. 326 of vol. iv.

of his life, his disappointments embittered his temper, and he seems to have † been disgusted with all religions and all governments. I have been informed from an eye-witness of one of his last interviews with POPE, who was then given over by the physicians, that Bolingbroke, standing behind POPE's chair, looked earnestly down upon him, and repeated several times interrupted with sobs, "O Great God, what is man! I never knew a person that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or a warmer benevolence for all mankind." It is to be hoped that * Bolingbroke profited by those

† His manner of reasoning and philosophizing has been so happily caught in a piece entitled *A Vindication of Natural Society*; that many, even acute readers, mistook it for a genuine discourse of the author whom it was intended to expose; it is indeed a master-piece of irony. — No writings that raised so mighty an expectation in the public as those of Bolingbroke, ever perished so soon and sunk into oblivion.

* It is asserted on good authority, that Bolingbroke was accustomed to ridicule POPE as not understanding the drift of his own principles in their full extent; It is plain from many of our author's letters, vol. ix. p. 324. that he was pleased to find such an interpretation could be given to this poem as was consistent with the fundamental principles of religion. *This also*

those remarkable words that POPE spoke in his last illness to the same gentleman who communicated the foregoing anecdote ; —

“ I am

farther appears from some curious letters that passed in the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-two, between Ramsay, Racine the younger, and our author. The former addressed a vindication of the principles of the Essay on Man to Racine, who had charged it with Spinozism and irreligion. This produced a letter from POPE to Racine, which concludes with these remarkable words. “ I declare therefore loudly and with the greatest sincerity, that my sentiments are diametrically opposite to those of Spinoza, and even of Leibnitz. They are in truth perfectly agreeable to the tenets of Pascal, and the Archbishop of Cambray ; and I shall think it an honour to imitate the moderation and docility of the latter, in always submitting all my private opinions to the decision of the church,” London, Sep. 1. 1747.

There is a circumstance in the letter of Ramsay above-mentioned, too remarkable to be omitted ; and which perhaps some may be almost tempted to doubt the truth of. In a case of so delicate a nature I chuse to quote the original. “ M. le Chevalier Newton, grand Géomètre & nullement Métaphysicien, étoit persuadé de la vérité de la Religion : mais il voulut rasiner sur d'anciennes erreurs Orientales, & renouvela l'Arianisme par l'organe de son fameux disciple & intrepere M. Clarke ; qui m' avoua quelque tems avant que de mourir après plusieurs conférences que j' avois eues avec lui, combien il se repentoit d' avoir fait imprimer son Ouvrage : je fus témoin il y a douze ans, à Londres, des derniers sentimens de ce modeste & vertueux Docteur.”

Œuvres de Racine, tom. i. p. 233.

The

"I am so certain of the soul's being immortal that I seem even to feel it within me, as it were by intuition." After such a declaration, and after writing so fervent and elevated a piece

The manner in which Ramsay explains the doctrine of the Essay is as follows. "POPE is far from asserting that the present state of man is his *primitive* state, and is conformable to order. His design is to shew that, *since the Fall*, all is proportioned with weight, measure, and harmony, to the condition of a *degraded* being, who suffers, and who deserves to suffer, and who cannot be restored but by sufferings; that physical evils are designed to cure moral evil; that the passions and the crimes of the most abandoned men are confined, directed, and governed by infinite wisdom, in such a manner, as to make order emerge out of confusion, light out of darkness, and to call out innumerable advantages from the transitory inconveniences of this life; that this so gracious Providence conducts all things to its own ends, without ever hurting the liberty of intelligent beings, and without either causing or approving the effects of their deliberate malice; that All is *ordained* in the physical order, as All is *free* in the moral; that these two orders are connected closely without fatality, and are not subject to that necessity which renders us virtuous without merit, and vicious without crime; that, we see at present but a single wheel of the magnificent machine of the universe; but a small link of the great chain; and but an insignificant part of that immense plan which will one day be unfolded. Then will God fully justify all the incomprehensible proceedings of his wisdom and goodness; and will vindicate himself, as Milton speaks, from the rash judgment of mortals."

Lettre De M. De Ramsay.

A Pontoise le 28 April, 1742.

of

of devotion, as the universal prayer, would it not be injustice to accuse our author of libertinism and irreligion? Especially, as I am told he had inserted an address to Jesus Christ, in the *Essay on Man*, which he omitted at the instance of Bishop Berkley, because the Christian dispensation did not come within the compass of his plan. Not that so pious and worthy a prelate could imagine, that this Platonic scheme, of the BEST, sufficiently accounts for the introduction of moral and physical evil into the world; which in truth nothing but revelation can explain, and nothing but a future state can compensate *.

* The *Essay on Man* was elegantly, but unfaithfully, translated into French verse by M. Du Resnel. It was more accurately rendered into French prose by M. De Silhouette. Which translation has been often printed; at Paris 1736; at London 1741, in Quarto; at the Hague, 1742. He has subjoined a defence of the doctrines of the *Essay* from Warburton's *Letters*: and has added a translation also, with a large commentary, of the four succeeding epistles of POPE. This is the same M. De Silhouette, who has since been the famous Controller General of the Finances in France. He is well known in London, where he resided a considerable time, attentive to the politics as well as poetry of England.

SECT.

S E C T. X.

*Of the Moral ESSAYS in five EPISTLES
to several persons.*

THE patrons and admirers of French literature, usually extol those authors of that nation who have treated of life and manners: and five of them particularly are esteemed to be unrivalled; namely, MONTAIGNE, CHARRON, ROCHFOLCAULT, LA BRUYERE, and PASCAL. These are supposed to have penetrated deeply into the most secret recesses of the human heart, and to have discovered the various vices and vanities that lurk in it. I know not why the English should in this respect yield to their polite neighbours, more than in any other. BACON in his *Essays*, HOBBS in his treatises, and PRIOR in his elegant and witty *Alma*, have shewn a profound knowledge of man; and many portraits of Addison may be compared with the most finished touches of La Bruyere. But the *Epistles* we are now entering

ing upon will place the matter beyond a dispute; for the French can boast of no author who has so much exhausted the science of morals, as POPE has in these five Epistles. They indeed contain all that is solid and valuable in the above-mentioned French writers, of whom our author was remarkably fond: But whatever observations he has borrowed from them, he has made his own by the dexterity of his application.

1. Men may be read, as well as books, too much *.

“STUDY life;” cry the lettered men of the world: but that world cannot be known merely by that study alone. The dread of pedantry is a characteristic folly of the present age. We adopted it from the French, without considering the reasons that give rise to it among that people: the religious, and particularly the Jesuits, perceiving that a taste for learning began widely to diffuse itself among the laity, could find no surer method of repressing it,

* Ep. 1. ver. 10.

than

than by treating the learned character as ridiculous. This ridicule was carried so far, that, to mention one instance out of ten thousand, the publisher of Rouchfoucault's maxims makes a grave apology in form, for quoting Seneca in Latin.

2. At half mankind, when gen'rous Manly raves,
All know 'tis virtue, for he thinks them knaves *.

THE character alluded to is the principal one the Plain Dealer of Wycherly, a comedy taken from the Misanthrope of Moliere, but much inferior to the original. Alcestes has not that bitterness of spirit, and has much more humanity and honour than Manly. Writers transfuse their own characters into their works: Wycherly was a vain and profligate libertine; Moliere was beloved for his candour, sweetness of temper and integrity. It is remarkable that the French did not relish this incomparable comedy for the three first representations. The strokes of its satire were

* Ver. 57.

too delicate to be felt by the generality of the audience, who expected only the gross diversion of laughing; so that at the fourth time of its being acted, the author was forced to add to it one of his coarsest farces; but Boileau in the mean time affirmed that it was the capital work of their stage, and that the people would one time be induced to think so.

3. Unthought-of frailties cheat us in the wife †.

FOR who could imagine that LOCKE was fond of romances; that NEWTON once studied astrology; that Dr. CLARKE valued himself for his agility, and frequently amused himself in a private room of his house in leaping over the tables and chairs: and that our author himself was a great epicure? When he spent a summer with a certain nobleman, he was accustomed to lie whole days in bed on account of his head-achs, but would at any time rise with alacrity, when his servant informed him there were stewed lampreys for dinner.

† Ver. 69.

On the evening of an important battle, the Duke of MARLBOROUGH was heard chiding his servant for having been so extravagant as to light four candles in his tent, when Prince Eugene came to confer with him. ELIZABETH was a coquet, and BACON received a bribe. Dr. BUSBY had a violent passion for the stage; it was excited in him by the applauses he received in acting the Royal Slave before the King at Christ-Church; and he declared, that if the rebellion had not broke out, he had certainly engaged himself as an actor. LUTHER was so immoderately passionate, that he sometimes boxed MELANCTHON's ears; and MELANCTHON himself was a believer in judicial astrology, and an interpreter of dreams. RICHLIEU and MAZARIN were so superstitious as to employ and pension MORIN, a pretender to astrology, who cast the nativities of these two able politicians. Nor was Tacitus himself, who generally appears superior to superstition, untainted with this folly, as may appear from the twenty-

second chapter of the sixth book of his annals. Men of great genius have been somewhere compared to the pillar of fire that conducted the Israelites, which frequently turned a cloudy side towards the spectator.

4. See the same man, in vigour, in the gout;
 Alone, in company, in place, or out;
 Early at business, and at hazard late;
 Mad at a fox-chase, wise at a debate;
 Drunk at a borough, civil at a ball;
 Friendly at Hackney, faithless at Whitehall *.

THE unexpected inequalities of our minds and tempers are here exhibited in a lively manner, and with a perfect knowledge of nature. I cannot forbear placing before the reader Tully's pourtrait of Cataline, whose inconsistencies and varieties of conduct are thus enumerated: "*Utebatur hominibus improbis multis, et quidem optimis se viris deditum esse simulabat; erant apud illum illecebræ libidinum multæ: erant etiam industriæ quidam stimuli ac laboris; flagrabant libidinis vitia apud*

* Ver. 71.

illum :

illum: vigeant etiam studia rei militaris: neque ego unquam fuisse tale monstrum in terris ullum puto, tam ex contrariis diversisque inter se pugnantibus naturæ studiis, cupiditatibus conflatum. Quis clarioribus viris quodam tempore jucundior? Quis turpioribus conjunctior? Quis civis meliorum partium aliquando? Quis tetrior hostis huic civitati? Quis in voluptatibus inquinatior? Quis in laboribus patientior? Quis in rapacitate avarior? Quis in largitione effusior? *

5. What made, say Montagne, or more sage Charron †.

ONE of the reasons that makes Montagne so agreeable a writer is, that he gives so strong a picture of the way of life of a country gentleman in the reign of Henry the third. The descriptions of his castle, of his library, of his travels, of his entertainments, of his diet and dress, are particularly pleasing. Malebranch and Pascal have severely and justly censured his scepticism. Peter Charron contracted a

* Orat. pro M. Cælio. Sect. 3. † Ver. 87.

very strict friendship with him; insomuch that Montagne permitted him by his will to bear his arms: in his book of Wisdom which is published at Bourdeaux in the year one thousand six hundred and one, he has inserted a great number of Montagne's sentiments; this treatise has been loudly blamed by many writers of France, and particularly GARASSE the Jesuit. Our Stanhope, an orthodox Divine, translated it. BAYLE has remarked in opposition to these censurers, that of a hundred thousand readers, there are hardly three to be found in any age, who are well qualified to judge of a book, wherein the ideas of an exact and metaphysical reasoning are set in opposition to the most common opinions. POPE has borrowed many remarks from Charron.

6. A godless regent tremble at a star *.

THE duke of Orleans here pointed at, was an infidel and libertine, and at the same time, as well as BOULANVILLIERS, was a bigotted

* Ver. 90.

believer

believer in judicial astrology ; he is the author of many of those flimsy songs, *nugæ canoræ*, to which the language and the manners of France seem to be peculiarly adapted. He knew mankind. "*Quiconque est sans honneur & sans humeur, said he frequently, est un courtisan parfaite.*" Crebillon the father, during this regent's administration, wrote a set of odes against him of wonderful energy and keenness, and almost in the spirit of Alceus ; if it be not a kind of profanation to speak thus, of any production of a poet that writes under a despotic government.

7. Alas in truth the man but chang'd his mind
Perhaps was sick, in love, or had not din'd *.

For the destruction of a kingdom, said a man of wit, nothing more is sometimes requisite than a bad digestion of the prime minister.

8. Judge we by nature ? Habit can efface,
Interest o'ercome, or policy take place :
By actions ? those uncertainty divides :
By passions ? these dissimulation hides ;

* Ver. 127.

192 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Opinions ? they still take a wider range :
Find if you can in what you cannot change.
Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes,
Tenets with books, and principles with times †.

WE find here in the compass of eight lines, an anatomy of human nature; more sense and observation cannot well be compressed and concluded in a narrower space. This passage might be drawn out into a voluminous commentary, and be worked up into a system concerning the knowledge of the world: There seems to be an inaccuracy in the use of the last verb; the natural temperament is by no means suddenly changed, or *turned* with a change of climate, though undoubtedly the humours are originally formed by it: *influenced by*, would be a more proper expression than *turn with*, if the metre would admit it.

9. His passion still, to covet gen'ral praise,
His life, to forfeit it a thousand ways ;
A constant bounty which no friend has made ;]
An angel tongue which no man can persuade ;

† Ver. 182.

A fool,

A fool with more of wit than half mankind,
Too rash for thought, for action too refin'd :
A tyrant to the wife his heart approves ;
A rebel to the very king he loves ;
He dies an out-cast of each church and state,
And harder still flagitious yet not great *.

THIS character of the Duke of Wharton is finished with much force and expressiveness ; the contradictions that were in it are strongly contrasted. In an entertaining work lately published, which it is hoped will diffuse a relish for biography, we have a remarkable anecdote relating to this nobleman's speech in favour of the bishop of Rochester. His Grace, then in opposition to Court, went to Chelsea the day before the last debate on that prelate's affair, where acting contrition, he professed being determined to work out his pardon at Court by speaking against the bishop, in order to which he begged some hints. The minister was deceived, and went through the whole cause with him, pointing out where the

* Ver. 205.

strength of the argument lay, and where it's weakness. The Duke was very thankful, returned to town, passed the night in drinking and without going to bed, went to the House of Lords, where he spoke for the bishop, recapitulating in the most masterly manner, and answering all that had been urged against him*.

10. When Cataline by rapine swell'd his store ;
 When Cæsar made a noble dame a whore ;
 In this the lust, in that the avarice
 Were means, not ends ; ambition was the vice †.

THE same passion excited Richlieu to throw up the dyke at Rochelle, and to dispute the prize of poetry with Corneille ; whom to traduce was the surest method of gaining the affection of this ambitious minister, who aspired equally to excel in all things ; nay, who formed a design to be canonized as a saint.

11. Lucullus, when frugality could charm,
 Had roasted turnips in the Sabin farm †.

* Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England, vol. ii. p. 133.

† Ver. 214.

† Ver. 218.

FEW

FEW writers of his country have displayed a greater energy of sentiment than Crebillon * ; in his Cataline we have a noble one that may illustrate this doctrine of POPE ; “ If, says this fierce and inflexible conspirator, I had only Lentulus’s of my party, and if it was filled only with men of virtue, I should easily assume that character also, and be more virtuous than any of them.”

Et s’ il n’ étoit rempli que-d’ hommes vertueux,
Je n’ aurois pas de peine à l’ être encor plus qu’ eux.

12. In this one passion man can strength enjoy,
As fits give vigour, just when they destroy §.

THE strength and continuance of what our author calls the ruling passion, is finely exemplified in RIGHT characters; namely, the

* The creditors of Crebillon would have stopped the profits of this tragedy, but the spirited old bard appealed to the king in council, and procured an honourable decree in his favour, setting forth, that works of genius should not be deemed Effects that were capable of being seized. This writer’s works were lately printed in a magnificent manner at the Louvre, in two volumes, quarto.

§ Ver. 22.

196 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

POLITICIAN: the DEBAUCHEE, the GLUTTON, the OECONOMIST, the COQUET, the COURTIER, the MISER, and the PATRIOT. Of these characters, the most lively, because the most dramatic, are the fifth and seventh. There is true humour also in the circumstance of the frugal crone who blows out one of the consecrated tapers in order to prevent it's wasting. Shall I venture to insert another example or two? An old usurer lying in his last agonies was presented by the priest with the crucifix. He opened his eyes a moment before he expired, attentively gazed on it, and cried out, "These jewels are counterfeit, I cannot lend more than ten pistoles upon so wretched a pledge." To reform the language of his country was the ruling passion of Malherbe. The priest who attended him in his last moments, asked him if he was not affected with the description he gave him of the joys of heaven? By no means answered the incorrigible bard, I desire to hear no more of them, if you cannot describe them in a purer style.

style. Both these stories would have shone under the hands of POPE.

THIS doctrine of our author may be farther illustrated by the following passage of Bacon. "It is no less worthy to observe, how little alteration, in good spirits, the approaches of death make; for they appear to be the same men, till the last instant. Augustus Cæsar died in a compliment; Livia, conjugii nostri memor, vive et vale. Tiberius in dissimulation; as Tacitus saith of him: Jam Tiberium vires et corpus, non dissimulatio deferebant. Vespasian, in a jest, sitting upon the stool, Ut puto Deus fio. Galba with a sentence; Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani; holding forth his neck. Septimius Severus, in dispatch; Addeste, si quid mihi restat agendum *."

THIS epistle concludes with a stroke of art worthy admiration. The poet suddenly stops the vein of ridicule with which he was flowing,

* Bacon's Essays. Essay ii.

198 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

and addresses his friend in a most delicate compliment, concealed under the appearance of satire.

And you ! brave Cobham to the latest breath
 Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death :
 Such in those moments as in all the past,
 " Oh save my country, heav'n, shall be your last "

13. Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,
 To make a wash, would hardly stew a child ;
 Has ev'n been prov'd to grant a lover's pray'r ;
 And paid a tradesman once to make him stare ;
 Gave alms at Easter, in a Christian trim,
 And made a widow happy for a whim *.

THE epistle on the characters of women, from whence this truly witty character is taken, is highly finished, and full of the most delicate satire. Bolingbroke, a judge of the subject, thought it the master-piece of POPE. Pleasantry reigns throughout it ; and the bitterness of the satire is concealed in a laugh. The characters are lively, though uncommon. I scarcely remember one of them in our comic

* Epist. 2. v. 53.

writers of the best order. The ridicule is heightened by many such strokes of humour, carried even to the borders of extravagance, as that in the second line, here quoted. The female foibles have been the subject of perhaps more wit, in every language, than any other topic that can be named. The sixth satire of Juvenal, though detestable for its obscenity, is undoubtedly the most witty of all his sixteen. POPE confines himself to paint those inconsistencies of conduct, to which a volatile fancy is thought to incline the sex. And this he exemplifies in the contrarieties that can be discovered in the characters of the AFFECTED, the SOFT-NATURED, the WHIMSICAL, the LEWD and VICIOUS, the WITTY and REFINED. In this comprehensive view is perhaps included each species of female folly and absurdity, which is the proper object of ridicule. If this Epistle yields, in any respect, to the tenth satire of Boileau on the same subject, it is in the delicacy and variety of the transitions, by which the French writer passes from one

200 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

character to another, connecting each with the foregoing. It was a common saying of Boileau, speaking of Bruyere, that one of the most difficult parts of composition, was the art of transition. That we may see how happily POPE has caught the manner of Boileau, let us survey one of his pourtraits : it shall be that of his learned lady.

Qui s'offrira d'abord ? c'est cette Scavante,
 Qu'estime Roberval, & que Sauveur frequente.
 D'ou vient qu'elle a l'œil trouble, & le teint si terni ?
 C'est que sur le calcal, dit-on, de Cassini,
 Un Astrolabe en main, elle a dans sa gôutièr
 Il suivre Jupiter passé la nuit entiere :
 Gardons de la troubler. Sa science, se croy,
 Aura par s'occuper ce jour plus d'un employ,
 D'un nouveau microscope ou doit en sa présence
 Tantost chez Dalancé faire l'experience ;
 Puis d'une femme morte avec son embryon,
 Il faut chez Du Vernay voir la dissection.*

* Which last line is a little gross and offensive: as it must be confessed are some of Pope. There is not a single stroke of this sort in Young's Satires on Women. I wish the delicacy and reservedness of four or five Ladies now living, who have real learning and taste, would permit me to insert their names in this place, as a counterpart to this affected character in Boileau.

14. No thought advances, but her eddy brain
Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
Full sixty years the world has been her trade,
The wisest fool much time has ever made.
From loveless youth to unrespected age,
No passion gratify'd, except her rage.
So much the fury still outran the wit,
The pleasure miss'd her, and the scandal hit*.

THESE spirited lines are part of a character designed for the famous Dutchess of Marlborough; whom SWIFT had also severely satirized in the *Examiner*. Her beauty, her abilities, her political intrigues, are sufficiently known †. The violence of her temper frequently broke out into wonderful
and

* V. 125. Ep. 2.

† See the account of her own conduct, drawn up under her own eye and direction, by Mr. HOOKE, author of the Roman History, of the life of Fenelon, and of the translation of the travels of Cyrus. Dr. KING, of St. Mary Hall in Oxford, informed me, that this translation was made at Dr. Cheyne's house at Bath, and that he himself had often been Hooke's Amanuensis on this occasion, who dictated his translation to him with uncommon facility and rapidity. The Dutchess rewarded Hooke with 5,000 l. for his trouble; but quarrelled with him afterwards, because,

and ridiculous indecencies. In the last illness of the great Duke her husband, when Dr. Mead left his chamber, the Dutchess, disliking his advice, followed him down stairs, *swore* at him bitterly, and was going to tear off his perriwig. Dr. Hoadly, the late bishop of Winchester, was present at this scene. These lines were shewn to her Grace as if they were intended for the portrait of the Dutchess of Buckingham, but she soon stopped the person that was reading them to her, and called out aloud—"I cannot be "so imposed upon—I see plainly enough "for whom they are designed;" and abused POPE most plentifully on the subject; tho' she was afterwards reconciled to, and courted him. This character, together with those of PHILOMEDE and CLOE, were first pub-

as she affirmed, he attempted to convert her to Popery. Hooke was a Mystic, and a Quietist, and a warm disciple of Fenelon. It was he who brought a Catholic priest to take our author's confession on his death-bed. The priest had scarce departed, when Bolingbroke, coming over from Battersea, flew into a great fit of passion and indignation on the occasion.

lished

lished in this edition of POPE. They are all animated with the most poignant wit. That of Cloë is particularly just and happy, who is represented as content merely and only to *dwell in decencies*, and satisfied to avoid giving offence; and is one of those many insignificant and useless beings,

Who want, as thro' blank life they dream along,
Sense to be right, and passion to be wrong;

as says the ingenious author of the *Universal Passion*; a work that abounds in wit, observation on life, pleasantry, delicacy, urbanity, and the most well-bred raillery, without a single mark of spleen and ill-nature. These were the first *characteristical* satires in our language, and are written with an ease and familiarity of style, very different from this author's other works. The four first were published in folio, in the year 1725; * and the fifth and sixth, incomparably

* In these, the characters of *Clarinda*, of *Zantippe* the violent lady, *Delia* the chariot-driver, of *Master Betty* the huntress,

parably the best, on the characters of women, in the year 1727, that is, eight years before this epistle of POPE. Dr. Young was one of the most amiable and benevolent of men; most exemplary in his life, and sincere in his religion *; nobody ever said more

huntress, of *Daphne* the critic, of *Lemira* the sick lady, the female *Philosopher*, the *Theologist*, of the languid lady, of *Thalestris* the swearer, of *Lyce* the old beauty, of *Lavinia*, of a nymph of spirit, of *Julia* the manager, of *Alicia* the sloven, of *Clio* the slanderer, of the affected *Astoria*, of the female *Arbiter*, and of the female *Gamester*; are all of them drawn with truth and spirit. And the introductions to these two satires, particularly the address to the incomparable Lady Betty Germain, are as elegant as any thing in our language. After reading these pieces, one is at a loss to know what Mr. POPE could mean by saying, that tho' Young was a man of genius, yet that *he wanted common sense*.

* Mr. Walter Harte assured me, he had seen the pressing letter that Dr. Young wrote to Mr. POPE, urging him to write something on the side of Revelation, in order to take off the impressions of those doctrines which the Essay on Man were supposed to convey. He alluded to this in the conclusion of his first Night-thought.

O had he press'd his theme, pursu'd the track
Which opens out of darkness into day!
O had he mounted on his wing of fire,
Soar'd where I sink, and sung immortal man!

brilliant

brilliant things in conversation. The late Lord MELCOMBE informed me, that when he and Voltaire were on a visit to his Lordship at Eastbury, the English poet was far superior to the French, in the variety and the novelty of his bon mots and repartees; and Lord Melcombe was himself a good judge of wit and humour, of which he himself had a great portion. If the friendship with which Dr. Young honoured me does not mislead me, I think I may venture to affirm, that many high strokes of character in his *Zanga*; many sentiments and images in his *Night-thoughts*; and many strong and forcible descriptions in his paraphrase on *Job*, mark him for a sublime and original genius. Tho' at the same time I am ready to confess, that he is not a * correct and equal writer,

* So little sensible are we of our own imperfections, that the very last time I saw Dr. Young, he was severely censuring and ridiculing the false pomp of fustian writers, and the nauseousness of *bombast*. I remember he said, that such torrents of eloquence were *muddy* as well as *noisy*; and that these *violent* and *tumultuous* authors, put him in mind of a passage in Milton, B. 2. v. 539.

Others,

writer, and was too often turgid and hyperbolic.

15. See how the world its veterans rewards,
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards;
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,
Young without lovers, old without a friend;
A sop for their passion, but their prize a sot,
Alive, ridiculous; and dead, forgot*.

THE antithesis, so remarkably strong in these lines, was a very favourite figure with our poet: he has indeed used it but in too many parts of his works; nay, even in his translation of the Iliad †; where it ought not to have

Others, with vast Typhæan rage more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind. Hell scarce holds the wild uproar,

* V. 243.

† Voltaire speaks thus of La Motte: so fashionable a critic may, perhaps, be attended to.—Au-lieu d'échauffer son génie en tâchant de copier les sublimes peintures d'Homère, il voulut lui donner de l'esprit; c'est la Manie de la plupart des François; une espèce de pointe qu'ils appellent un trait, une petite antithèse, un léger contraste de mots leur suffit.—The following lines are instances:

On

have been admitted. Our author seldom writes many lines together without an antithesis. It must be allowed sometimes to add strength to a sentiment, by an opposition of images; but, too frequently repeated, it becomes tiresome, and disgusting. Rhyme has almost a natural tendency to betray a writer into it. But the purest authors have despised it, as an ornament pert, and puerile, and epigrammatic. Seneca, Pliny, Tacitus, and later authors, abound in it. Quintilian has sometimes used it, with much success; as

On offense les dieux, mais par des sacrifices
De ces dieux irrités on fait des dieux propices.

And again—

Tout le camp s'écria dans une joie extrême,
Que ne vaincra-t-il point, il s'est vaincu lui-même.

I must only just add, that La Motte, in all the famous dispute about the ancients, never said a thing so ill-founded, and so void of taste, as the following words of the same Voltaire: "*Homere n' a jamais fait répandre de pleurs.*" *Affectus quidem vel illos mites vel hos concitatores, nemo erit tam indoctus qui non in sua potestate hunc auctorem habuisse fateatur.* Quintilian, lib. 10. cap. 1. Had Voltaire ever read Quintilian? or rather, had he ever read Homer—in the original?

when

208 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

when he speaks of style; magna, non nimia; sublimis, non abrupta; severa non tristis; læta, non luxuriosa; plena, non tumida. And sometimes Tully; as, vicit pudorem libido, timorem audacia, rationem amentia. But these writers fall into this mode of speaking but seldom, and do not make it their *constant* and *general manner*. Those moderns who have not acquired a true taste for the simplicity of the best ancients, have generally run into a frequent use of *point*, *opposition*, and *contrast*.

THEY who begin to study painting, are struck at first with the pieces of the most vivid colouring; they are almost ashamed to own, that they do not relish and feel the modest and reserved beauties of Raphael. 'Tis the same in writing; but, by degrees, we find that Lucan, Martial, Juvenal, Q. Curtius, and Florus, and others of that stamp, who abound in figures that contribute to the false florid, in luxuriant metaphors,

phors, in pointed conceits, in lively antitheses, unexpectedly darted forth, are contemptible for the very causes which once excited our admiration. 'Tis then we relish Terence, Cæsar, and Xenophon,

16. Kept dross for Duchesses, *the world shall know it*,
To you gave sense, good-humour, and a poet *.

The world shall know it—is a bad expression, and a poor expletive, into which our poet was forced by the rhyme †.

Maudit soit le premier, dont la verve insensée,
Dans les bornes d' un vers renferma sa pensée,
Et donnant à ses mots une étroite prison,
Voulut avec la rime enchaîner la raison ‡.

RYME also could alone be the occasion

* V. 291.

† La Rime gêne plus qu'elle n' orne les vers. Elle les charge d'Epithètes; elles rend souvent la diction forcée, & pleine d'une vaine parure. En allongant les discours, elle les affoiblit. Souvent on a recours à un vers inutile; pour en amener un bon. FENELON to M. DE LA MOTTE, Lettres, p. 62. A Cambray, 26 Janvier 1719.

‡ Boileau. Sat. 2. v. 53.

VOL. II.

E c

of

210 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

of the following faulty expressions; taken
160 from some of his most finished pieces.

Not Cæsar's Empress would *I* *deign to prove*—
If Queenberry to strip *there's no compelling*—
Wrapt into future times the *bard begun*—
Know all the noise the busy world can keep—
If true, a woful likeness, and *if lyes*—
Nothing so true as what you once *let fall*—
For virtue's self may too much *zeal be had*—
—— can no *wants endure*—
Nay half in heav'n *except what's mighty odd*—
—— listening ears *employ*—
—— on such a world *we fall*—
—— take scandal *at a spark*—
—— do *the knack*, and —— do *the feat*.—

And more instances might be added, if
it were not disagreeable to observe these
straws in amber. But if rhyme occasions
such inconveniences and improprieties in
so exact a writer as our author, what can be
expected from * inferior versifiers? It is not
my

* Our author told Mr. HARTE, that, in order to disguise
his being the author of the second epistle of the Essay on
Man,

my intention to enter into a trite and tedious discussion of the several merits of rhyme and blank verse. Perhaps rhyme may be properest for shorter pieces; for didactic, lyric, elegiac, and satiric poems; for pieces where closeness of expression, and smartness of style, are expected; but for subjects of a higher order, or for poems of a greater length, blank verse may be preferable. An epic poem in rhyme appears to be such a sort of thing, as the *Æneid* would have been if it had been written, like Ovid's *Fasti*, in hexameter and pentameter verses; and the reading it would have been as tedious as the travelling through that one,

Man, he made, in the first edition, the following bad rhyme:

A cheat! a whore! who starts not at the *name*,
In all the inns of court, or Drury Lane*?

And HARTS remembered to have often heard it urged, in enquiries about the author, whilst he was unknown, that it was impossible it could be POPE's, on account of this very passage.

* V. 205.

E c 2

long,

long, strait, avenue of firs, that leads from *Moscow* to *Petersburg*. I will give the reader Mr. POPE's own opinion on this subject, and in his own words, as delivered to Mr. Spence. "I have *nothing*, to say for
 " * rhyme; but that I doubt if a poem
 " can *support* itself without it in our lan-
 " guage, unless it be stiffened with such

* Boileau, whose practice it was to make the second line of a couplet before the first, having written (in his second satire) this line,

Dans mes vers recoufus mettre en pieces Malherbe,
 it was thought impossible by La Fontaine and Moliere, and other critical friends, for him to find a proper rhyme for the word Malherbe: at last he hit upon the following;

Et transposant cent fois & le nom & le verbe.

Upon shewing which line to La Fontaine, he cried out—
 " Ah! how happy have you been, my friend! I would
 " give the very best of all my Tales to have made such
 " a discovery." So important in the eyes of French poets is a lucky rhyme! The reader may judge what credit is due to the following anecdote of *Voltaire*. Questions sur l'Encycloped. Partie 5, 255 page. Je me souviendrai toujours que je demandai au célèbre POPE, pourquoi Milton n'avait pas rimé son Paradis perdu; & qu'il me répondit, *Because he could not*; parce qu'il ne le pouvait pas.—But the most harmonious of rhymers has said—"What rhyme
 " adds to sweetness, it takes away from sense." DRYDEN.

" strange

“strange words, as are likely to destroy our language itself. The high style that is affected so much in blank verse, would not have been supported even in Milton, had not his subject turned so much on such *strange* and *out of the world* things as it does.”—May we not, however, venture to observe, that more of that true harmony which will best *support* a poem, will result from a *variety* of pauses, and from an intermixture of those different *feet* (iambic and trochaic particularly) into which our language naturally falls, than from the uniformity of *similar terminations*. “*There can be no music,*” says COWLEY, “*with only one note.*”

17. Blest paper-credit! last and best supply!
That lends corruption lighter wings to fly!
Gold, imp'd by thee, can compass hardest things,
Can pocket States, can fetch or carry Kings;
A single leaf shall waft an army o'er,
Or ship off Senates to a distant shore;

A leaf,

214 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

A leaf, like Sibyls', scatter to and fro
Our fates and fortunes, as the winds shall blow;
Pregnant with thousands * flits the scrap unseen,
And silent sells a King, or buys a Queen †.

“NOT one of my works” (said POPE to Mr. Spence) “was more laboured than my “epistle on the Use of Riches.” It does indeed abound in knowledge of life, and in the justest satire. The lines above quoted have also the additional merit of touching on a subject that never occurred to former satirists. And tho’ it was difficult to say any thing new about avarice, “a vice that “has been so pelted” (says COWLEY) “with “good sentences,” yet has our author done it so successfully, that this epistle, together with Lord BACON’s thirty-third *Essay*, contains almost all that can be said on the use and abuse of riches, and the absurd extremes of avarice and profusion. But our

* The word *flits* heightens the satire, by giving one the strong idea of an obscene and ill-omened bird.

† Of the use of Riches, v. 39.

poet has enlivened his precepts with so many various characters, pictures, and images, as may entitle him to claim the preference over all that have treated on this tempting subject, down from the time of the Plutus of Aristophanes. That very lively and amiable old nobleman, the late Lord BATHURST, told me, "that he was much surprized to see what he had with repeated pleasure so often read as an *epistle* addressed to himself, in this edition converted into "a *dialogue* ; in which," said he, "I perceive I really make but a shabby and indifferent figure, and contribute very little to the spirit of the *dialogue*, if it *must be* a *dialogue* ; and I hope I had generally more to say for myself in the many charming conversations I used to hold with POPE and Swift, and my old poetical friends."

18. A Statesman's slumbers how this speech could spoil !
 " Sir, Spain has sent a thousand jars of oil ;
 " Huge bales of British cloth blockade the door ;
 " A hundred oxen at your levee roar *."

* V. 55.

NOTHING

NOTHING can exceed this ridicule of the many inconveniences that would have *encumbered villainy*, by bribing and by paying *in kind*. The following examples carry the satire still higher, and can hardly be thought to be excelled by any strokes of irony and humour in the best parts of Horace, Juvenal, or Boileau.

His Grace will game; to White's a bull be led,
 With * spurning heels, and with a butting head,
 To White's be carry'd, as to ancient † games,
 Fair coursers, vases, and alluring dames.
 Shall then Uxorio, if the stakes he sweep,
 Bear home six whores, and make his lady weep?
 Or soft Adonis, so perfum'd and fine,
 Drive to St. James's a whole herd of swine ‡?

WE can only lament that our author did not live long enough to be a witness of the

* As a consecrated beast to a sacrifice; and alluding to Virgil, with much pleasantry,

Jam cornu petat, & pedibus qui spargat arenam.

† Alluding to the prizes that Achilles bestows in the games of Homer. Iliad, 23. b.

‡ V. 67.

midnight

midnight (or morning) *orgies* of the gamblers at BROOKS's. What a subject for the severity of his satire! Perhaps we might have seen men,

Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
Yet touch'd and sham'd by *ridicule* alone!

For surely that vice deserves the keenest invective, which, more than any other, has a natural and invincible tendency to narrow and to harden the heart, by *impressing* and *keeping up habits of selfishness*. "I foresee," (said MONTESQUIEU, one day, to a friend visiting him at *La Brede*) "that gaming will be the ruin of Europe. During play, the body is in a state of indolence, and the mind in a state of vicious activity."

19. Damn'd to the mines, an equal fate betides
The slave that digs it, and the slave that hides*.

† THIS is plainly taken from "the causes

* V. 109.

† See the *Adventurer*, N^o 63, published 1753. The reflection with which CHARTRES's epitaph, in this epistle, concludes, is from LA BRUYERE.

“ of the *decay of Christian Piety*.” It has always been held, says this excellent writer, the severest treatment of slaves and malefactors, *damnare ad metalla*, to force them to dig in the mines : now this is the covetous man’s lot, from which he is never to expect a release. And the character of Helluo the glutton, who exclaimed even in his last agonies (at the end of the first of these epistles)

— then bring the jowl !

is clearly borrowed from the conclusion of one of the tales of FONTAINE :

Puis qu’il faut que je meure
 Sans faire tant de façon,
 Qu’ on m’ apporte tout à l’ heure
 Le reste de mon poisson.

So true is that candid acknowledgment which our author makes in his sensible preface, “ I fairly confess that I have served “ myself all I could by reading.” But the noble passage I shall next quote, he has not borrowed

borrowed from any writer. It is intended to illustrate the usefulness, in the hands of a gracious Providence, that results from the extremes of avarice and profusion; and it recurs to the leading principle of our author's philosophy, namely, that contraries and varieties, in the moral as well as the natural world, by counter-poizing and counter-working each other, contribute ultimately to the *benefit* and *beauty* of the *whole*.

Hear then the truth; "'tis Heav'n each passion sends,
 " And different men directs to different ends;
 " Extremes in nature equal good produce,
 " Extremes in man concur to gen'ral use.
 " Ask we what makes one keep, and one bestow?
 " That Pow'r who bids the ocean ebb and flow;
 " Bids seed-time, harvest, equal course maintain,
 " Thro' reconcil'd extremes of drought and rain;
 " Builds life on death, on change duration founds,
 " And gives th' eternal wheels to know their rounds."

VOLTAIRE has, in many parts of his works, besides his *Candide*, and his *Philoso-*

phical Dictionary, exerted the utmost efforts of his wit and argument to depreciate and destroy the doctrine of *Optimism*, and the idea that,

Th' eternal art educes good from ill.

HE imagines, absurdly enough, that the only solid method of accounting for the origin of evil, consistently with the other attributes of God, is not to allow his *omnipotence*. Sa puissance est très grande; mais qui nous a dit qu'elle est infinie; quand ses ouvrages nous montrent le contraire? Quand la seule ressource qui nous reste pour le disculper est d'avouer que son pouvoir n'a pu triompher du mal physique & moral? Certes, j'aime mieux l'adorer borné que méchant. Peut-être dans la vaste machine de la nature, le bien l'a-t-il emporté nécessairement sur le mal, & l'éternel artisan a été forcé dans ses moyens, en faisant
encore

encore (malgré tant de maux) ce qu'il avait de mieux *.

VOLTAIRE, after having run the full career of infidelity and scepticism, seems to have sunk at last into absolute fatalism. The sentiments are indeed put into the mouth of MEMMIUS, the friend and patron of LUCRETIUS, and addressed to CICERO: this was only the method the French philosopher took to acquaint us with his own thoughts.

JE suis donc ramené malgré moi à cette ancienne idée que je vois être la base de tous les systèmes, dans laquelle tous les philosophes retombent après mille détours, & qui m'est démontrée par toutes les actions des hommes, par les miennes, par tous les événemens que j'ai lus, que j'ai vus, & auxquels j'ai eu part; c'est le fatalisme,

* Questions sur l'Encyclopedie, 9 partie, p. 348. So inconclusive and unphilosophical an assertion, deserves no serious confutations

c'est.

222 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

c'est la nécessité dont je vous ai déjà parlé *.

20. Like some *lone* Chartreux stands the good old hall,
Silence without, and fasts within the wall;
 No *rafter'd* roofs with dance and tabor sound,
 No *noontide* bell invites the country round:
 Tenants with sighs the *smoakless* tow'rs survey,
 And turn th' unwilling steeds another way:
Benighted wanderers, the forest o'er,
 Curs'd the *sav'd* candle, and *unop'ning* door;
 While the *gaunt* mastiff *growling* at the gate,
Affrights the beggar, whom he longs to eat †.

In the worst inn's worst room, with *mat* half-hung,
 The floors of *plaster*, and the *walls* of *dung*,
 On once a *flock-bed*, but repair'd with *straw*,
 With *tape-ty'd* curtains, never meant to draw,
 The *George* and *Garter* dangling from that bed
 Where *tawdry yellow* strove with *dirty red*,
 Great Villers li[†]. —

THE use, the force, and the excellence

* “He must have a very good stomach,” (says Mr. Gray) “that can digest the *Crambe recocta* of Voltaire.
 “Atheism is a vile dish, tho’ all the cooks of France
 “combine to make new sauces for it.” Letters, quarto, page 385.

† V. 182.

‡ V. 399.

of

of language, certainly consists in raising, *clear, complete, and circumstantial* images, and in turning *readers* into *spectators*. I have quoted the two preceding passages as eminent examples of this excellence, of all others the most essential in poetry. Every epithet, here used, *paints* its object, and *paints* it *distinctly*. After having passed over the moat full of cresses, do you not *actually* find yourself in the middle court of this forlorn and solitary mansion, overgrown with docks and nettles? And do you not hear the dog that is going to assault you?—Among the other fortunate circumstances that attended Homer, it was not one of the least, that he wrote before *general* and *abstract* terms were invented. Hence his Muse (like his own Helen standing on the walls of Troy) points out every *person*, and *thing*, *accurately* and *forcibly*. All the views and prospects he lays before us, appear as *fully* and *perfectly* to the *eye*, as that which engaged

224 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

engaged the attention of Neptune, when he was sitting (Iliad, b. 13. v. 12.)

Ἰψὲ δ' ἐν ἀκροτάτῃ κορυφῇ Σαμὴ ὑψηλῆς,
Θρηικῆς· ἐθεὶ γὰρ εἵαιετο πασσά μιν ἰδὴ,
Φαιετο δὲ Πριάμοιο πόλις, καὶ τῆς Ἀχαιῶν.

THOSE who are fond of *generalities*, may think the number of *natural, little* circumstances, introduced in the beautiful narration of the expedition of DOLON and DIOMED (Book the 10th) too *particular* and *trifling*, and below the dignity of Epic poetry. But every reader of a just taste will always admire the *minute* description of the helmet and crest, at verse the 257th; the clapping of the wings of the Heron which they could not see; the *squatting* down among the dead bodies till Dolon had passed; Ulysses *bisping* to Diomed as a signal; the striking the horses with his bow, because *he had forgotten* to bring his whip with him; and the innumerable circumstances

stances which make this narration so *lively*, so *dramatic*, and so *interesting*. Half the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* might be quoted as examples of this way of writing. So different from the unfinished, half-formed figures, presented to us by many modern writers. How much is the pathetic heightened by Sophocles, when, speaking of Deianira determined to destroy herself, and taking leave of her palace, he adds, a circumstance that *Voltaire* would have disdained!

— Κλαίει δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσι στυ-
γασμοῖσι, διὰ ἰσχυρὸν δόλοισι παρὸς *.

Among the Roman poets, *Lucretius* will furnish many instances of this sort of strong painting. Witness his portrait of a jealous man; Book the 4th, v. 1130.

Aut quod in ambiguo verbum jaculata reliquit;
Aut nimium jactare oculos; aliumve tueri
Quod putat, in vultuque videt vestigia risus.

* Trachiniae, v. 922.

226 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Of Iphigenia going to be sacrificed, at the moment, when,

—— mæstum ante aras astare parentem
Sensit, & hunc propter ferrum celare ministros *.

Of Fear, in book iii. v. 155.

Sudorem itaque & pallorem existere toto
Corpore; & infringi linguam; vocemque aboriri;
Caligare oculos; sonare aures; succidere artus.

WITHOUT specifying the various *strokes* of nature, with which Virgil has described the prognostics of the weather in his first Georgic, let us only consider with what energy he has *enumerated* and *particularized* the gestures and attitudes of his dying Dido. No five verses ever contained more images, or images more *distinctly* expressed.

Illa graves oculos conata attollere, rursus
Deficit; infixum stridet sub pectore vulnus:
Ter sese attollens, cubitoque innixa levavit,
Ter revoluta toro est: oculisque errantibus, alto
Quæsitivæ cælo lucem, ingemuitque repertâ †.

* Book i. v. 21.

† Æn. iv. 688.

The words of *Virgil* have here painted the dying Dido, as powerfully as the pencil of *Reynolds* has done, when she is just dead.

BUT none of the Roman writers has displayed a greater force and vigour of imagination than *TACITUS*; who was in truth a great poet. With what an assemblage of masterly strokes has he exhibited the distress of the Roman army under *Cæcina*, in the first book of the *Annals*! *Nox per diversa in- quies; cum barbari festis epulis, læto cantu, aut truci sonore, subjecta vallium ac resul- tantes saltus, complerent. Apud Romanos, invalidi ignes, interruptæ voces, atque ipsi passim adjacerent vallo, oberrarent tentoriis, insomnes magis quam pervigiles, ducemque terruit diræ quies.* And what a spectre he then immediately calls up, in the style of *MICHAEL ANGELO*! *Nam Quintilium Va- rum, sanguine oblitum, & paludibus emersum, cernere & audire visus est, velut vocantem, non tamen obsecutus, & manum intendentis repulisse.*

228 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

A CELEBRATED foreigner, the Count Algarotti, has passed the following censure on our poetry, as deficient in this respect.

“ LA poesia dei populi *settentrionali* pare a me, che, generalménte parlando, consista più di *penfieri*, che d' *immagini*, si compiac-
cia delle riflessione egualmente che dei sen-
timenti: non sia così *particolareggiata*, e
pittoresca come e la nostra. Virgilio a
cagione d'esempio rappresentando Didone
quando esce alla caccia fa una tal descrizione
del suo vestimento, che tutti i ritrattisti,
leggendo quel passo, la vestirebbono a un
modo:

Tandem progreditur, magnâ stipante caterva,
Sidoniam picto chlamydem circumdata limbo;
Cui pharetra ex auro, crines nodantur in aurum,
Aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem.

Non così il MILTONO quando descrive la
nuda bellezza di Eva;

Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her eye,
In every gesture, dignity and love.

Con quella parole generale, e *astratte* idee
di

di grazia, cielo, amore, e maestà non pare
a lei che ognuno si formi in mente una Eva
a posta sua?" *

It must indeed be granted, that this passage gives no distinct and particular idea of the person of Eve; but in how many others has Milton drawn his *figures*, and expressed his *images*, with *energy* and *distinctness*?

Under a coronet his flowing hair
In curls on either cheek play'd; wings he wore
Of many a colour'd plume sprinkled with gold;
His habit fit for speed succinct, and held
Before his decent steps a silver wand †.

Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; DESPAIR
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike †.

From his slack hand the garland, wreath'd for Eve,
Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed;
Speechless he stood, and pale! §

And SPENCER, the master of MILTON, so much abounds in portraits peculiarly mark-

* See his works. Leghorn. t. 8. † Par. Lost, b. iii. v. 640.
‡ B. xi. v. 489. § B. ix. v. 892.

230 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

ed, and strongly created, that it is difficult to know which to select from this copious magazine of the most lively painting. The same may be said of SHAKESPEARE ; whose little touches of nature it is no wonder VOLTAIRE could not relish, who affords no example of this beauty in his *Henriade*, and gives no proofs of a *picturesque fancy*, in a work that abounds more in *declamation*, in moral and political reflections, than in poetic images ; in which there is little *character* and less *nature*, and in which the author himself *appears throughout the piece*, and is *himself the hero of his poem*.

I HAVE dwelt the longer on this subject, because I think I can perceive many symptoms, even among writers of eminence, of departing from these *true and lively*, and *minute*, representations of Nature, and of *dwelling in generalities*. To these I oppose the testimony of, perhaps the most judicious and elegant critic among the ancients. Proculdubio qui dicit *expugnata* esse civitatem,

tatem, complectitur omnia quæcunque talis fortuna recipit: sed in affectus minus penetrat brevis hic velut nuntius. At si *aperias* hæc quæ verbo uno inclusa erant, *apparent* effusæ per domos ac templa *flammæ*, & *ruentium* tectorum fragor, & ex diversis clamoribus unus quidem sonus; - *aliorum* fuga incerta; *alii* in extremo *complexu* suorum cohærentes, & infantium sæminarumque ploratus, & malè usque in illum diem fervati fato senes; tum illa profanorum sacrorumque *direptio*, *effferentium* prædas, *repetentiumque* discursus, & *aëti* ante suum quisque prædonem *catenati*, & conata *retinere infantem* suum *mater*, & sicubi majus luctum est, pugna inter victores. Licet enim hæc omnia, ut dixi, complectatur *eversio*,
 MINUS EST TAMEN TOTUM DICERE,
 QUAM OMNIA *.

21. Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
 From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?

* QUINTILIAN, lib. viii. cap. 3.

232 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Not to the * skies in useless columns tost,
 Or in proud falls magnificently lost ;
 But clear and artless, pouring thro' the plain,
 Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.
 Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows ?
 Whose seats the weary traveller repose ?
 Who taught that heav'n-directed spire to rise ?
 " The MAN of Ross," each lisping babe replies,
 Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread !
 The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread.

* Has not the learned commentator, in his note on this passage, given an illustration rather hard and far-fought, in the following words ?

" The *intimation* in the first line well ridicules the *modest* of fashionable magnificence ; these columns aspiring " to prop the skies, in a very different sense from the " heaven-directed spire in the verse that follows ; as the " *expression* in the second line exposes the *meanness* of it, in " *falling proudly*, to no purpose."—Perhaps the same may be said of a note that follows, on verse 333.

" Cutler and Brutus, dying, both exclaim,

" Virtue and wealth ! what are ye but a name !

" There is a greater beauty in this comparison than the " common reader is aware of. Brutus was, in morals at " least, a *Stoic*, like his uncle.—Now *Stoical* virtue was, as " our author truly tells us, not *exercise* but *apathy*. Con- " tracted all, retiring to the breast. In a word, like Sir " J. Cutler's *purse*, nothing for use, but kept close shut, " and centered all within himself. Now *virtue* and *wealth*, " thus circumstanced, are indeed no other than mere " names."

He

He feeds yon alms-house, neat, but void of state,
Where AGE and WANT sit smiling at the gate :
Him portion'd maids, apprentic'd orphans blest,
The young who labour, and the old who rest *.

THESE lines, which are eminently beautiful, particularly one of the three last, containing a fine *prosopopœia*, have conferred immortality on a plain, worthy, and useful citizen of Herefordshire, Mr. John Kyrle, who spent his long life in advancing and contriving plans of public utility. The HOWARD of his time : who deserves to be celebrated more than all the heroes of PINDAR. The particular reason for which I quoted them, was to observe the pleasing effect that the use of common and familiar words and objects, judiciously managed, produce in poetry. Such as are here the words, *causeway, seats, spire, market-place, alms-house, apprentic'd*. A fastidious delicacy, and a false refinement, in order to avoid meanness, have deterred our writers from the introduc-

* V. 253.

234 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

tion of such words; but DRYDEN often hazarded it, and it gave a secret charm, and a natural air to his verses.

22. Sir Balaam now, he lives like other folks,
He takes his chirping pint, and cracks his jokes :
“ Live like yourself,” was soon my Lady’s word ;
And lo ! two puddings smok’d upon the board.*

THIS tale of Sir Balaam, his progress and change of manners, from being a plodding, sober, plain, and punctual citizen, to his becoming a debauched and dissolute courtier and senator, abounds in much knowledge of life, and many strokes of true humour, and will bear to be compared with the exquisite history of Corusodes, in one of SWIFT’S Intelligencers.

LORD BATHURST, LORD LYTTTELTON, and Mr. SPENCE, and other of his friends, have assured me, that among intimates POPE had an admirable talent for telling a story.

In great companies he avoided speaking much. And in his examination before the House of Lords, in ATTERBURY'S trial, he faltered so much as to be hardly intelligible.

23. You show us, Rome was glorious, not profuse,
And pompous buildings once were things of use ;
Yet shall (my Lord) your just, your noble rules,
Fill half the land with imitating-fools *.

THUS our author addresses the EARL of BURLINGTON, who was then publishing the designs of Inigo Jones, and the Antiquities of Rome by Palladio. "Never was protection and great wealth †" (says an able judge of the subject) "more generously and judiciously diffused, than by this great person, who had every quality of a genius and artist, except envy. Though his own designs were more chaste and classic than Kent's, he entertained him in his house 'till his death, and was more studious to extend

* V. 25.

† Mr. Walpole, p. 108. Anecdotes of Painting, vol. iv.

236 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

his friend's fame than his own. As we have few samples of architecture more antique and imposing than the colonnade within the court of his house in Piccadilly, I cannot help mentioning the effect it had on myself. I had not only never seen it, but had never heard of it, at least with any attention, when, soon after my return from Italy, I was invited to a ball at Burlington-house. As I passed under the gate by night, it could not strike me. At day-break, looking out of the window to see the sun rise, I was surprized with the vision of the colonnade that fronted me. It seemed one of those edifices in Fairy Tales, that are raised by genii in a night's time."—POPE having appeared an excellent *moralist* in the foregoing epistles, in this appears to be as excellent a * *connoisseur*, and has given not

* Though he always thought highly of *Addison's* Letter from Italy, yet he thought the poet had spoken in terms too general of the finest buildings and paintings, and without much discrimination of taste.

only some of our *first*, but our *best* rules and observations on *architecture* and *gardening*, but particularly on the latter of these useful and entertaining arts, on which he has dwelt more largely, and with rather more knowledge of the subject. The following is copied verbatim from a little paper which he gave to Mr. * SPENCE. “ Arts are taken from
 “ nature, and, after a thousand vain efforts
 “ for improvements, are best when they re-
 “ turn to their first simplicity. A sketch
 “ or analysis of the first principles of each
 “ art, with their first consequences, might
 “ be a thing of most excellent service. Thus,
 “ for instance, all the rules of † architecture
 “ might be reducible to three or four heads;
 “ the justness of the openings; bearings

* “ Who had both taste and zeal for the present style,” says Mr. Walpole, p. 134.

† Our author was so delighted with Grævius, that he drew up a little Latin treatise on the chief buildings of Rome, collected from this antiquarian. Mr. Gray had also an exquisite taste in architecture, joined to the knowledge of an accurate antiquarian. See the introduction to Bentham’s History of Ely Cathedral, supposed to be drawn up by Gray, or under his eye,

238 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

“ upon bearings; the regularity of the pil-
 “ lars, &c. That which is not just in build-
 “ ings is disagreeable to the eye (as a greater
 “ upon a lesser, &c.) and this may be called
 “ the * *reasoning of the eye*. In laying out
 “ a garden, the first and chief thing to be
 “ considered is the genius of the place.
 “ Thus at Riskins, now called Peirce Lodge,
 “ Lord * * * should have raised two or three
 “ mounts, because his situation is all a plain,
 “ and nothing can please without variety.”

MR. WALPOLE, in his elegant and enter-
 taining History of *Modern Gardening*, has
 clearly proved that *Kent* was the artist to
 whom the English nation was chiefly in-
 debted for diffusing a taste in laying out
 grounds, of which the French and Italians
 have no idea. But he adds, much to the
 credit of our author, that POPE undoubt-

* To see all the beauties that a place was susceptible of,
 was to possess, as Mr. Pitt expressed it, “ *The prophetic eye of*
 “ *taste*.”

edly

edly contributed to form Kent's taste. The design of the Prince of Wales's garden at Carlton House, was evidently borrowed from the Poet's at Twickenham. There was a little affected modesty in the latter, when he said of all his works he was most proud of his garden. And yet it was a singular effort of art and taste to impress so much variety and scenery on a spot of five acres. The passing through the gloom from the grotto to the opening day, the retiring and again assembling shades, the dusky groves, the larger lawn, and the solemnity of the termination at the cypresses that lead up to his mother's tomb, are managed with exquisite judgment; and though * Lord Peterborough assisted him,

* I cannot forbear adding, in this place, the following anecdote from Pope to Mr. Spence; which I give in his own words:—" Lord Peterborough, after a visit to FENELON, Archbishop of Cambray, said to me—Fenelon is a man that was cast in a particular mould, that was never made use of for any body else. He's a delicious creature! But I was forced to get from him as soon as I possibly could, for else he would have made me *pions*."

To

240 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

To form his quincunx and to rank his vines ;

those were not the most pleasing ingredients of his little perspective. I do not know whether the disposition of the garden at Rousham, laid out for General Dormer, and in my opinion the most engaging of all Kent's works, was not planned on the model of Mr. Pope's, at least in the opening and retiring " shades of Venus's Vale."

It ought to be observed, that many years before this epistle was written, and before Kent was employed as an improver of grounds, even so early as the year 1713, Pope seems to have been the very first person that censured and ridiculed the formal, French, Dutch, false and unnatural, mode in gardening, by a paper in the Guardian, Number 173, levelled against capricious operations of art, and every species of *verdant* sculpture, and *inverted* nature ; which paper abounds with *wit* as well as *taste*, and ends with a ridiculous catalogue of various figures

figures, cut in ever-greens. Neither do I think that these four lines in this epistle,

Here Amphitrite fails thro' myrtle bow'rs ;
There gladiators fight, or die in flow'rs :
Un-water'd see the drooping sea-horse mourn,
And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty urn *,

do at all excel the following passage in his Guardian :

“ A citizen is no sooner proprietor of a
“ couple of yews, but he entertains thoughts
“ of erecting them into giants, like those of
“ Guildhall. I know an eminent Cook, who
“ beautified his country seat with a corona-
“ tion dinner in greens, where you see the
“ champion flourishing on horseback at one
“ end of the table, and the queen in perpe-
“ tual youth at the other.”

BUT it was the vigorous and creative imagination † of MILTON, superior to the

* V. 123.

† See Mr. Walpole's Anecdotes, v. iv. p. 128.

prejudices of his times, that exhibited in his EDEN, the first hints and outlines of what a beautiful garden should be; for even his beloved ARIOSTO and TASSO, in their luxuriant pictures of the gardens of ALCINA and ARMIDA, shewed they were not free from the unnatural and *narrow* taste of their countrymen; and even his master, SPENCER, has an *artificial fountain* in the midst of his *bowre of blifs*.

I CANNOT forbear taking occasion to remark in this place, that, in the sacred drama, intituled, *L'Adamo*, written and published at Milan in the year 1617, by GIO. BATTISTA ANDREINI, a Florentine, which Milton certainly had read, (and of which Voltaire has given so false and so imperfect an account, in his *Essay on the Epic Poets*) the prints that are to represent *Paradise* are full of clipt hedges, square parterres, strait walks, trees uniformly lopt, regular knots and carpets of flowers, groves nodding at groves, marble fountains, and water-works. And yet

yet these prints were designed by CARLO ANTONIO PROCCACHINI, a celebrated landscape painter of his time, and of the school of the CARRACHES: many of those works are still admired at Milan. To every scene of this drama is prefixed a print of this artist's designing. And, as the book is very curious and uncommon, I intend to give a specimen and analysis of it in the Appendix to this volume.

It hence appears, that this enchanting art of modern gardening, in which this kingdom claims a preference* over every nation in Europe, chiefly owes its origin and its improvements to two great poets, MILTON and POPE. May I be suffered to add, in behalf of a favourite author, and who would have been a first-rate poet, if his style had been equal to his conceptions, that the

* In CASTELL's *Villa's of the Ancients* illustrated, folio, London, 1728, may be seen how much the celebrated Tuscan villa resembled our gardens, as they were planned a few years ago. Pliny's villa was like his genius.

244 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Seasons of THOMSON have been very instrumental in diffusing a general * taste for the beauties of *nature* and *landscape*.

24. To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
 To rear the column, or the arch to bend,
 To swell the terrace, or to sink the grot;
 In all, let Nature never be forgot.
 But treat the Goddess like a modest Fair,
 Nor over-dress, nor leave her wholly bare;
 Let not each beauty ev'ry where be spy'd,
 When half the skill is decently to hide.
 He gains all points who pleasingly confounds,
 Surprises, varies, and conceals the bounds †.

The best comments that have ever been given on these sensible and striking precepts, are, *Painsbill*, *Hagley*, the *Leasowes*, *Persefield*, *Woborn*, *Stourhead*, and *Blenheim*; all of them exquisite scenes in different styles, and fine examples of *practical* poetry.

* It is only within a few years that the picturesque scenes of our own country, our lakes, mountains, cascades, caverns, and castles, have been visited and described.

† V. 47.

Consult

25. Consult the GENIUS* of the place in all,
 That tells the waters, or to rise or fall;
 Or helps th' ambitious hill the heav'ns to scale,
 Or scoops in circling theatres the vale;
 Calls in the country, catches op'ning glades,
 Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades.
 Now breaks, or now directs th' intending lines,
 Paints as you plant, and as you work designs †.

Would it not give life and vigour to this
 noble *prosopopæia*, if we were to venture to
 alter only one word, and read, in the second
 line,

He tells the waters—

* Dr. Warburton's discoveries of some latent beauties in this passage, seem to be fanciful and groundless, and never thought of by the author. "First, the *Genius of the place*" (says this commentator) "*tells the waters*, or simply gives directions: then, *he helps* th' ambitious hill, or is a fellow-labourer: then again, he *scoops* the *circling theatre*, or works alone, and in chief. Afterwards, rising fast in our idea of dignity, he *calls in the country*, alluding to the orders of princes in their progress, when accustomed to display all their state and magnificence: his character then grows sacred, he *joins willing woods*, a metaphor taken from one of the offices of the priesthood; till, at length, he becomes a divinity, and *crowns* and *presides* over the whole.

"Now breaks, or now directs——&c."

† V. 57.

instead

246 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

instead of

That tells—?

OUR author is never happier than in his allusions to painting, an art he so much admired and understood: So below, at verse 81,

*The wood supports the plain, the parts unite,
And strength of shade contends with strength of light.*

Indeed, the two arts in question differ only in the materials which they employ. And it is neither exaggeration or affectation to call MR. BROWN a great *painter*; for he has realized

*Whate'er LORRAIN light-touch'd with softening hue,
Or savage ROSA dash'd, or learned POUSSIN drew *.*

26. Still follow sense, of ev'ry art the soul,
Parts answering parts shall slide into a whole;
Spontaneous beauties all around advance,
Start ev'n from difficulty, strike from chance;
Nature shall join you; Time shall make it grow,
A work to wonder at—perhaps a *Stow* †.

* Castle of Indolence, st. 38.

† V. 65.

I MUST

I MUST confess (says the Earl of Peterborough, Letter 34, vol. viii.) that in going to Lord Cobham's I was not led by curiosity: I went thither to see what I had seen, and what I was sure to like. I had the idea of those gardens so fixed in my imagination by many descriptions, that nothing surprized me; Immensity and Van Brugh appear in the whole, and in every part. Your joining in your letter animal and vegetable beauty, makes me use this expression: I confess the stately SACHARISSA at Stow, but am content with my little AMORET." (meaning Bevis Mount, near Southampton.) It is plain, therefore, that Lord P. was not pleased with these gardens; but they have, since his time, received many capital alterations and additions; of which the ingenious author of *Observations on Modern Gardening* has given an accurate account, and a minute analysis, in page 213 of his entertaining work; and he concludes his description in the following words: "Magnificence and splendor are the characteristics of Stow; it is like

248 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

one of those places celebrated in antiquity, which were devoted to the purposes of religion, and filled with sacred groves, hallowed fountains, and temples dedicated to several deities; the resort of distant nations, and the object of veneration to half the heathen world; this pomp is, at Stow, blended with beauty; and the place is equally distinguished by its amenity and grandeur."

27. And Nero's terraces desert their walls*.

This line is obscure; it is difficult to know what is meant by the terraces deserting their walls. In line 172, below, is another obscurity;—"his hard heart denies"—it does not immediately occur *whose* heart, the word is so far separated from the person intended.

28. Ev'n in an ornament it's place remark,
Nor in an hermitage set DR. CLARKE.†

* V. 72.

† V. 77.

These

THESE lines are as ill-placed, and as injudicious, as the busto which they were designed to censure. POPE caught an aversion to this excellent man from BOLINGBROKE, who hated CLARKE, not only because he had written a book, which this fashionable philosopher could not confute, but because he was a favourite of QUEEN CAROLINE. In our author's manuscripts were two other lines upon this writer :

Let CLARKE live half his days the poor's support,
But let him pass the other half at Court.

His *Attributes*, and his *Sermons*, will be read
and admired by all lovers of good reasoning,
as long as this Epistle by all lovers of good
poetry.

29. At Timon's villa let us pass a day,
Where all cry out, "What sums are thrown away!"

THE whole gang of malignant and dirty
scribblers, who envied the success and supe-

• V. 99.

VOL. II.

K k

rior

250 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

rior merit of POPE, was in arms at this description, which they applied to the Duke of Chandos, and his house at Canons. Wellsted published in folio a most abusive libel, entitled, *Of Dulness and Scandal, occasioned by the Character of Lord Timon, &c.* And Lady Wortley Montague joined in the accusation, in her *Verses addressed to the Imitator of Horace* *. The Duke, tho' at first alarmed, was, it is said, afterwards convinced of our author's innocence. I have thought it not improper to insert at length the following letter, as it contains the most direct and positive denial of this fact; as it was written at the very time, to a private friend, and expressed all POPE's feelings on the subject; and as it is not to be found in this edition of his works. It is addressed to

* These are the lines. Page 5, folio. London, for A. Dodd.

But if thou see'st a great and generous heart,
Thy bow is doubly bent to force a dart.
Nor only justice vainly we demand,
But even benefits can't rein thy hand;
To this, or that, alike in vain we trust,
Nor find thee less ungrateful than unjust.

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 251

Aaron Hill, Esq; an affected and fustian* writer, but who, by some means or other, gained our author's confidence and friendship.

Twickenham, Dec. 22, 1731.

DEAR SIR,

I THANK you for your Tragedy, which I have read over a sixth time, and of which I not only preserve, but increase, my

* See his Athelwood—and his Merope, which I have frequently reproached Mr. Garrick for acting—his Poem on Acting—his poem in praise of Blank Verse, which begins thus; and which one would think was burlesque :

Up, from Rhyme's poppi'd vale! and ride the storm
That thunders in blank verse!—

See his works throughout, in 4 vols. octavo; from which the treatise on the Bathos might have been much enriched with many truly ridiculous examples, viz.

Some black-soul'd Fiend, some Fury ris'n from hell
Has darken'd all discernment. MEROPE.

————— Thro' night's eye
Saw the pale murderer stalk! Ibid.

Some hint's officious reach had touch'd her ear.

One is surprized that such a writer could be an intimate friend of Bolingbroke, Pope, and Thomson. He was, however, one of the very first persons who took notice of the last, on the publication of Winter, on which he wrote a complimentary copy of verses. See a letter of Thomson's to Hill, dated Goodman's Coffee-house, 1726.

K k 2

esteem.

esteem. You have been kind to this age, in not telling the next, in your preface, the ill taste of the town; of which the reception you describe it to have given of your play—worse, indeed, than I had heard, or could have imagined—is a more flagrant instance than any of *those trifles* mentioned in *my Epistle*; which yet, I hear, the sore vanity of our pretenders to taste flinches at extremely. The *title* you mention had been properer to that Epistle.—I have heard no criticisms about it, nor do I listen after them. Nos hæc novimus esse nihil. (I mean, I think the verses to be so :) But as you are a man of tender sentiments of honour, I know it will grieve you to hear another undeservedly charged with a crime his heart is free from; for, if there is truth in the world, I declare to you, I never imagined the least application of what I said of Timon could be made to the D— of Ch——s, than whom there is scarce a more blameless, worthy, and generous, beneficent character, among all our nobility: And if I have not lost my senses,

senses, the town has lost 'em, by what I heard so late as but two days ago, of the uproar on this head. I am certain, if you calmly read every particular of that description, you'll find almost all of 'em point-blank the reverse of that person's villa. It's an awkward thing for a man to print, in defence of his own work, against a chimæra: you know not who, or what, you fight against; the objections start up in a new shape, like the armies and phantoms of magicians, and no weapon can cut a mist or a shadow. Yet it would have been a pleasure to me, to have found some friend saying a word in my justification, against a malicious falsehood. I speak of such, as have known by their own experience, these twenty years, that I always took up their defence, when any stream of calumny ran upon them. If it gives the Duke one moment's uneasiness, I should think myself ill paid, if the whole earth admir'd the poetry; and, believe me, would rather never have written a verse in my life, than any one of 'em should trouble a truly

254 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

truly good man. It was once my case before, but happily reconciled; and, among generous minds, nothing so indears friends, as the having offended one another. I lament the malice of the age, that studies to see its own likeness in every thing; I lament the dulness of it, that cannot see an excellence: The first is my unhappiness, the second your's; I look upon the fate of your piece, like that of a great treasure, which is bury'd as soon as brought to light; but it is sure to be dug up the next age, and enrich posterity."

30. His study! with what authors is it stor'd?
In Books, not Authors, curious is my Lord;
To all their dated backs he turns you round;
These Aldus printed, these Du Sueil has bound:
Lo! some are vellum, and the rest as good,
For all his Lordship knows; but they are wood*.

THERE is a flatness and insipidity in the last couplet, much below the usual manner of our author. YOUNG has been more sprightly and poignant on the same subject.

* V. 133.

With what, O Codrus! is thy fancy smit?
 The flower of learning, and the bloom of wit.
 Thy gaudy shelves with crimson bindings glow,
 And EPICUREUS is a perfect beau;
 How fit for thee! bound up in crimson too,
 Gilt, and like them devoted to the view.
 Thy books are *furniture*. Methinks 'tis hard
 That Science should be purchas'd by the yard;
 And TONSON, turn'd upholsterer, send home
 The gilded leather to *fit up* thy room*.

31. Where *sprawl*† the Saints of VERRIO and LA-
 GUERRE‡.

ONE single verb has marked with felicity
 and force the distorted attitudes, the inde-
 cent subjects, the want of nature and grace,
 so visible in the pieces of these two artists,
 employed to adorn § our royal palaces and
 chapels. "I cannot help thinking (says

* Universal Passion, Sat. 2.

† He is not so happy in the use of another verb below, at
 verse 153.

The rich buffet well-coloured serpents *grace*.

‡ V. 146.

§ Strange as it may seem, yet I believe we may venture
 to assert, that there is not a painted ceiling or stair-case in
 this kingdom, that we should not be ashamed to shew to an
 intelligent foreigner.

Pope

256 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Pope to Mr. Allen; in Letter 89, vol. ix.) and I know you will join with me, who have been making an altar-piece, that the zeal of the first reformers was ill-placed, in removing *pictures* (that is to say, *examples*) out of churches*; and yet suffering *epitaphs* (that is to say, flatteries and false history) to be a burthen to church-walls, and the shame as well as derision of all honest men."—This is the sentiment, it may be said, of a *papistical* poet; and yet I cannot forbear thinking it is founded on good sense, and religion well-understood. Notwithstanding the illiberal and ill-grounded rage which has lately been excited against Popery, yet I hope we may still, one day, see our places of worship beautified with proper ornaments, and the generosity and talents of our living artists perpetuated on the naked walls of St. Paul's.

* The chapel of New College in Oxford will soon receive a singular and invaluable ornament: A window, the glass of which is stained by Mr. JERVIS, from that exquisite picture of the Nativity by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

32. To rest the cushion and soft Dean invite,
Who never mentions hell to ears polite *.

THIS it seems was a fact concerning a certain smooth, and supple, and inoffensive Divine, one, we may imagine, that held the doctrines which Dr. *Young* so agreeably laughs at in his sixth satire :

“ Shall pleasures of a short duration chain
“ A *Lady's* soul in everlasting pain ?
“ Will the great Author us poor worms destroy,
“ For now and then a *flap* of transient joy ?”
No, he's for ever in a smiling mood,
He's like themselves ; or how could he be good ?
And they blaspheme, who blacker schemes suppose.—
Devoutly thus, Jehovah they depose
The pure, the just ! and set up in his stead,
A deity, that's perfectly *well-bred* !

33. Yet hence the poor are cloath'd, the hungry fed ;
Health to himself, and to his infants bread
The lab'rer bears †————

* V. 149. † V. 169.

258 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

A fine turned and moral reflection, which illustrates the doctrines of his Essay, in the second epistle, when he says, at line 237,

Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal ;
 But Heav'n's great view is One, and that the whole ;
 That counterworks each folly and caprice ;
 That disappoints th' effect of every vice ;—
 That *Virtue's* end from *Vanity* can raise,
 Which seeks no interest, no reward but praise ;
 And builds on wants, and on defects of mind,
 The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.

THAT Providence should extract good from evil, and alter its natural bias and malignity, is a doctrine widely different from the loose and flagitious principles of MANDEVILLE, who has endeavoured to prove that *Private Vices are Public Benefits*.

34. You too proceed ! make falling arts your care,
 Erect new wonders, and the old repair ;
 Jones and Palladio to themselves restore,
 And be whate'er Vitruvius was before *.

* V. 192.

THIS

THIS is not fulsome adulation, but only such honest praise as the noble Lord whom he addressed strictly deserved: who inherited all that love of science and useful knowledge for which his family has been so famous. The name of BOYLE is, indeed, auspicious to literature. That sublime genius and good man, Bishop BERKLEY, owed his preferment chiefly to this accomplished peer. For it was he that recommended him to the Duke of Grafton, in the year 1721, who took him over with him to Ireland when he was Lord Lieutenant, and promoted him to the deanery of Derry in the year 1724*. Berkley gained the patronage and friendship of Lord Bur-

* ATTERBURY was desirous of seeing Berkley; to whom he was introduced by the Earl of Berkley. After he had left the room, What does your Lordship think of my cousin, said the Earl, does he answer your Lordship's expectations? The Bishop, lifting up his hands in astonishment, replied, "So much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and so much humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman."
— Duncombe's Letters.

260 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

lington, not only by his true politeness and the peculiar charms of his conversation, which was exquisite, but by his profound and perfect skill in architecture; an art which he had very particularly and accurately studied in Italy, when he went and continued † abroad four years, with Mr. Ashe, son of the Bishop of Clogher. With an insatiable and philosophic attention, Berkley surveyed and examined every object of curiosity. He not

† In this journey he paid a visit to Father Malebranche. The conversation turned on our author's celebrated system of the non-existence of matter. Malebranche, who had an inflammation in his lungs, and whom he found preparing a medicine in his cell, and cooking it in a small pipkin, for his disorder, exerted his voice and lungs so violently in the heat of their dispute, that he increased his disorder, which carried him off a few days after. See Biogr. Britannica, vol. ii. p. 251, as it is highly improved by the candid and learned Dr. Kippis.—Many a vulgar critic hath sneered at the *Series* of Berkley, for beginning with *Tar* and ending with the *Trinity*; incapable of observing the great art with which the transitions in that book are finely made, where each paragraph depends on and arises out of the preceding, and gradually and imperceptibly leads on the reader, from common objects to more remote, from matter to spirit, from earth to heaven.

only

only made the usual tour, but went over *Apulia* and *Calabria*, and even travelled on foot through *Sicily*, and drew up an account of that very classical ground; which was lost in a voyage to *NAPLES*, and cannot be sufficiently regretted. His generous project for erecting an University at *Bermudas*, the effort of a mind truly active, benevolent, and patriotic, is sufficiently known.

35. Bid harbours open, public ways extend,
 Bid temples worthier of the God ascend;
 Bid the broad arch the dangerous flood contain,
 The mole projected break the roaring main;
 Back to his bounds their subject sea command
 And roll obedient rivers through the land*.

No country has been enriched and adorned, within a period of thirty or forty years, with so many works of public spirit, as Great Britain has been; witness our many extensive roads, our inland navigations (some of

* V. 197.

which

which excel the boasted canal of *Languedoc*) the lighting and the paving and beautifying our cities, and our various and magnificent edifices. A general good taste has been diffused in planting, gardening, and building. The ruins of Palmyra, the Antiquities of Athens and Spalatro, and the Ionian antiquities, by WOOD, STUART, ADAM, and CHANDLER, are such magnificent monuments of learned curiosity as no country in Europe can equal. Let it be remembered, that these fine lines of Pope were written when we had no WYATT or BROWN, BRINDLEY or REYNOLDS; no Westminster bridge, no Pantheon, no Royal Academy, no King that is at once a judge and a patron of all those fine arts, that ought to be employed in raising and beautifying a palace equal to his dignity and his taste.

36. See the wild waste of all-devouring years,
How Rome her own sad sepulchre appears

THIS

THIS is the opening of the epistle to Mr. *Addison**, upon his treatise on medals, written in that pleasing form of composition so unsuccessfully attempted by many modern authors, DIALOGUE. In no one species of writing have the ancients so indisputable a superiority over us. The dialogues of Plato and Cicero, especially the former, are perfect dramas; where the characters are supported with consistency and nature, and the reasoning suited to the characters.

“ THERE are in English *Three* dialogues, and but three” (says a learned and ingenious author†, who has himself practised this way of writing with success) “ that deserve

* FICORINI, the celebrated virtuoso, said to Mr. Spence, at Florence:—“ *Addison* did not go any great depth in the study of medals: all the knowledge he had of that kind, I believe he received of me: and I did not give him above twenty lessons on that subject.”

† Dr. Hurd, in *Moral and Political Dialogues*, Preface, p. 14.

commendation ;

264 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

commendation; namely, the *Moralists* of Lord SHAFTESBURY; Mr. ADDISON's *Treatise on Medals*; and the *Minute Philosopher* of Bishop BERKLEY." ALCIPHON did, indeed, well deserve to be mentioned on this occasion; notwithstanding it has been treated with contempt by a writer* much inferior to BERKLEY in genius, learning, and taste. Omitting those passages in the fourth dialogue, where he has introduced his fanciful and whimsical

* Bishop Hoadly, in letters to Lady Sundon, vol. i. of his works. But Sherlock thought highly of ALCIPHON, and presented it to Queen Caroline with many encomiums. The Queen was used to be delighted with the conversation of Berkley, and perhaps Hoadly was a little jealous of such a rival. Lord Bathurst told me, that all the members of the *Scriblerus-club*, being met at his house at dinner, they agreed to rally Berkley, who was also his guest, on his scheme at Bermudas. Berkley having listened to all the lively things they had to say, begged to be heard in his turn; and displayed his plan with such an astonishing and animating force of eloquence and enthusiasm, that they were struck dumb, and, after some pause, rose up all together with earnestness, exclaiming—Let us all set out with him immediately.

opinions about *vision*, an attentive reader will find that there is scarce a single argument that can be urged in defence of Revelation, but what is here placed in the clearest light, and in the most beautiful diction: in this work there is a happy union of reasoning and imagination. The two different characters of the two different sorts of free-thinkers, are strongly contrasted with each other, and with the plainness and simplicity of *Euphranor*.

THESE Dialogues of Addison* are written with that *sweetness* and *purity* of style, that contribute to make him the first of our prose-writers. The Pleasures of Imagination, the Essay on the Georgics, and his last papers in the Spectator and Guardian, are models of language. And some late writers, who

* It is observable how much he improved after he wrote his *Travels*. In Swift's Preface to Sir W. Temple's works, and in his translations from the French, &c. in that book, there are many inaccurate and almost ungrammatical expressions: these were his very first publications.

266 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

seem to have mistaken *stiffness* for *strength*, and are grown popular by a pompous rotundity of phrase, make one wish that the rising generation may abandon this unnatural, false, and florid style, and form themselves on the *chaster* model of Addison. The chief imperfection of his treatise on medals, is, that the persons introduced as speakers, in direct contradiction to the practice of the ancients, are *fictitious*, not *real*: for CYNTHIO*, PHILANDER, PALÆMON, EUGENIO, and THEOCLES, cannot equally excite and engage the attention of the reader with SOCRATES and ALCIBIADES, ATTICUS and BRUTUS, COWLEY and SPRATT, MAYNARD and SOMERS. It is somewhat singular, that so many modern dialogue-writers should have failed in this particular, when so many of the most celebrated wits of modern Italy had given them eminent examples of the contrary pro-

* How ill the forms and ceremonies and compliments of modern good-breeding would bear to be exactly represented, see *Charactristics*, vol. i. p. 209.

ceeding,

ceeding, and, closely following the steps of the ancients, constantly introduced living and real persons in their numerous compositions of this sort; in which they were so fond of delivering their sentiments both on moral and critical subjects; witness the *Il Cortegiano* of B. CASTIGLIONE, the *Asolani* of P. BEMBO, *Dialoghi* del. S. SPERONE, the *Naugerius* of FRACASTORIUS, and *Lil. GYRALDUS de Poetis*, and many others. In all which pieces, the famous and living geniuses of Italy are introduced as discussing the several different topics before them.

37. Huge theatres, that now unpeopled woods*,
is not so poetical as what ADDISON says of
an amphitheatre,

That on its public shews unpeopled Rome,
And held, *uncrowded*, nations in its womb †.

* V. 7.

† Letter from Italy.

268 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

BUT the beginning of the nineteenth line
is eminently beautiful ;

AMBITION sigh'd——

38. And scarce are seen the *prostrate* NILE or RHINE ;
A small EUPHRATES thro' the piece is roll'd,
And little eagles wave their wings in gold ‡.

THE two first-mentioned *rivers* having
been *personified*, the *Euphrates* should not
have been spoken of as a *mere river*. The
circumstance in the last line is puerile and
little.

39. To gain Pescennius one employs his schemes
One grasps a Cecrops in ecstatic dreams §.

How his eyes languish ! how his thoughts adore
That painted coat which *Joseph* never wore ?
He shews, on *holidays*, a sacred pin,
That toucht the ruff, that toucht Queen Bess's chin ||.

A GREAT deal of wit has been wasted on
Antiquarians ; whose studies are not only

‡ V. 28. § V. 39. || Young, Satire iv.

pleasing

pleasing to the imagination, but attended with many advantages to society, especially since they have been improved, as they lately have been, in elucidating the most important part of all history, the *History of Manners*.

40. Oh when shall Britain, conscious of her claim,
Stand emulous of Greek and Roman fame?
In living medals see her wars enroll'd,
And vanquish'd realms supply recording gold ||.

ADDISON, in the ninety-sixth paper of the *Guardian*, has given us a proposal, which he drew up and delivered to the Lord Treasurer: The paper ends thus:

It is proposed,

1. That the English farthings and half-pence be recoined upon the union of the two nations. 2. That they bear devices and inscriptions alluding to all the most remarkable parts of her Majesty's reign. 3.

|| V. 53.

That

That there be a society established for the finding out of proper subjects, inscriptions, and devices. 4. That no subject, inscription, or device, be stamped without the approbation of this society, nor, if it be thought proper, without the authority of privy-council. By this means, medals, that are at present only a dead treasure, or mere curiosities, will be of use in the ordinary commerce of life, and, at the same time, perpetuate the glories of her Majesty's reign, reward the labours of her greatest subjects, keep alive in the people a gratitude for publick services, and excite the emulation of posterity. To these generous purposes nothing can so much contribute as medals of this kind, which are of undoubted authority, of necessary use and observation, not perishable by time, nor confined to any certain place; properties not to be found in books, statues, pictures, buildings, or any other monuments of illustrious actions.

41. Then shall thy CRAGGS (and let me call him mine)
On the cast ore, another POLLIO shine*.

TICKELL †, in his preface to the works of Addison, concludes a copy of highly elegant and polished verses, addressed to the Earl of Warwick, with the following fine lines :

These works divine, which, on his death-bed laid,
To thee, O *Craggs*, th' expiring sage convey'd,
Great, but ill-omen'd monument of fame,
Nor he surviv'd to give, nor thou to claim.
Swift after him thy social spirit flies,
And close to his, how soon ! thy coffin lies.
Blest pair ! whose union future bards shall tell,
In future tongues ; each other's boast ‡, farewell !
Farewell ! whom join'd in fame, in friendship try'd,
No chance could sever, nor the grave divide.

42. Statesman,

* V. 62.

† In the few things that Tickell wrote, there appear to be a peculiar terseness and neatness.

‡ Addison's works (says Atterbury, Letter x. v. 8.) came to my hands yesterday, Oct. 15, 1721. I cannot but think it a very odd set of incidents, that the book should be dedicated by a dead man to a dead man (Mr. Craggs) and even that the new patron (Lord Warwick) to whom Tickell chose

272 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

42. Statesman, yet friend to truth ! of soul sincere,
 In action faithful, and in honour clear ;
 Who broke no promise, serv'd no private end,
 Who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend ;
 Ennobled by himself, by all approv'd,
 And prais'd, unenvy'd, by the muse he lov'd §.

THESE nervous and finished lines were afterwards inscribed as an epitaph on this worthy man's monument in Westminster Abbey, with the alteration of two words in the last verse; which there stands thus:

Prais'd, wept, and honour'd by the muse he lov'd.

IT WAS CRAGGS, who in the most friendly and alluring manner offered our author a pension of three hundred pounds per annum; which if he had accepted, we should have been deprived of his best satires. Poets have a high spirit of liberty and independence.

to inscribe his verses, should be dead also before they were published. Had I been in the Editor's place, I should have been a little apprehensive for myself, under a thought that every one who had any hand in that work, was to die before the publication of it.

* V. 67.

They neither seek or expect rewards. ME-
CÆNASES do *not* create geniuses. Neither
SPENCER or MILTON, or DANTE or TASSO,
or CORNEILLE*, were patronized by the
governments under which they lived. And
HORACE and VIRGIL and BOILEAU were
formed, before they had an opportunity of
flattering AUGUSTUS and LEWIS XIV.

THOUGH POPE enlisted under the banner
of BOLINGBROKE, in what was called the
country party, and in violent opposition to
the measures of WALPOLE, yet his clear and
good sense enabled him to see the follies and
virulence of all parties; and it was his fa-
vourite maxim, that, however factious men

* Il n'aimoit point le Cour, (says Fontenelle, speaking
of his uncle *Corneille*) il y apportoit un visage presqu' inconnu,
un grand nom qui ne s'attiroit que des louanges, & un me-
rite qui n'etoit point le merite de ce pays-là. Tom. iii.
p. 126.

N. B. The piece of Fontenelle, alluded to in page 115 of
this volume, is to be found in Bayle's *Nouvelles*, &c. vol. v.
p. 88.

274 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

thought proper to distinguish themselves by *names*, yet when they got into power they all acted much in the same manner; saying,

I know how like *Whig* ministers to *Tory*.

And among his manuscripts were four very sensible lines, which contain the most solid apology that can be made for a minister of this country:

Our ministers like *gladiators* live;
'Tis half their business blows to *ward*, or *give*;
The good their *virtue* would effect, or *sense*,
Dies, between *exigents* and *self-defence*.

Yet he appears sometimes to have forgotten this candid reflection.

SECT.

S E C T. XI.

Of the EPISTLE to DR. ARBUTHNOT.

i. **S**HUT, shut the door, good John! fatigu'd, I said,
 Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead!
 The dog-star rages! nay, 'tis past a doubt,
 All Bedlam or Parnassus is let out:
 Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
 They rave, recite, and madden round the land*.

THIS abrupt exordium is animated and dramatic. Our poet, wearied with the impertinence and slander of a multitude of mean scribblers that attacked him, suddenly breaks out with this spirited complaint of the ill usage he had sustained. This piece was published † in the year 1734, in the

* V. 1.

† With this motto: *Neque sermonibus Vulgi dederis te, nec in premiis humanis spem posueris rerum tuarum: suis te oportet illecebris ipsa Virtus trahat ad verum decus. Quid de te alii loquantur, ipsi videant, sed loquentur tamen.*

TULLY.

form of an epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot; it is now given as a *Dialogue*, in which a very small share is allotted to his friend. *Arbuthnot* was a man of consummate probity†, integrity, and sweetness of temper: he had infinitely more learning than POPE or SWIFT, and as much wit and humour as either of them. He was an excellent mathematician and physician, of which his letter on the usefulness of mathematical learning, and his treatise on air and aliment, are sufficient proofs. His tables of ancient coins, weights, and measures*, are the work of a man intimately acquainted with ancient history and literature, and are enlivened with many curious and interesting particulars of the manners and ways of living of the ancients.

† Swift said, "he was a man that could do every thing but walk." His cheerfulness was remarkable: "As for your humble servant, *with a great stone in his kidneys*, and a family of men and women to provide for, he is as cheerful as ever in public affairs." Letters, vol. xx. p. 206.

* Oh, says Swift, if the world had but a dozen of Arbuthnots in it, I would burn my *Travels*! Letters, vol. ix. p. 56.

The

The History of John Bull, the *best parts* of the *Memoirs of Scriblerus*, the *Art of Political Lying*, the *Freeholders Catechism*, *It cannot rain but it pours*, &c. abound in strokes of the most exquisite humour. It is known that he gave numberless hints to Swift, and Pope, and Gay, of some of the most striking parts of their works. He was so neglectful of his writings, that his children tore his manuscripts and made paper-kites of them. Few letters in the English language are so interesting, and contain such marks of Christian resignation * and calmness of mind, as one that he wrote to Swift a little before his death, and is inserted in the 3d vol. of Let-

* "I make it my last request (says Arbuthnot in his last letter to Pope) that you will continue that noble disdain and abhorrence of vice, which you seem naturally endued with; but still with a due regard to your own safety; and study more to *reform* than *chastise*, though the one cannot be effected without the other." Letters, vol. viii. p. 290. The words are remarkable, and cannot fail of raising many reflections in the mind of the reader. Pope, in his answer, says, "To *reform*, and not to *chastise*, is impossible; and the best precepts, as well as the best laws, would prove of small use, if there were no examples to enforce them."

ters,

278 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

ters, page 157. He frequently, and ably, and warmly, in many conversations, defended the cause of revelation against the attacks of BOLINGBROKE and CHESTERFIELD. ●

THE strokes of satire, in many parts of this epistle, have such an extraordinary energy and poignancy, that our author's want of temper has been much censured; and I know not whether it will be a sufficient justification to say, that these malevolent scribblers, however impotent and insignificant, attacked his *person, morals, and family*. If Boileau ridicules and rallies vile writers, with more seeming pleasantry and good-humour, yet we ought to recollect, that *Boileau* was the aggressor, and had received no previous abuse, when he fell upon *Cotin, de Pure, Quinault, St. Amand, Colletet, Chapelain, and Theophyle*. It was on this account that the *Duke de Montausier*, a man of rigid virtue, so much condemned Boileau, that it was with great difficulty he was brought to read his works,
and

and be reconciled to him. The authors that Pope proscribed were in truth so mean and contemptible, that Swift said, " Give me a shilling, and I will insure you that posterity shall never know you had a single enemy, excepting those whose memory you have preserved."

*Laissez mourir un fat dans son obscurité.
Un auteur ne peut-il pourrir en seureté ?
Le Jonas inconnu seche dans la pousiere.
Le David imprimé n'a point veu la lumiere.
Le Moïse commence à moisir par les bords.
Quel mal cela fait-il ? Ceux qui sont morts sont morts.
Le tombeau contre vous ne peut-il les défendre,
Et qu'on fait tant d'auteurs pour remuer leur cendre ?
Que vous ont fait Perrin, Bardin, Pradon, Hainaut,
Colletet, Pelletier, Titreville, Quinaut.
Dont les noms en cent lieux, placez comme en leurs
niches,
Vont de vos vers malins remplir les hemistiches.*

BOILEAU, Satire ix. v. 89.

This is exquisitely pleasant ; and expressed with that purity and force, both of thought and diction, that happy Horatian mixture

280 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

of jest and earnest, that contribute to place *Despreaux* at the head of * modern *classics*. I think it must be confessed, that he has caught the manner of Horace more successfully than Pope. It is observable that Boileau, when he first began to write, copied JUVENAL; whose *violent, downwright, declamatory* species of satire, is far more easy to be imitated, than the oblique, indirect, delicate touches of Horace. The opinion of L. GYRALDUS concerning Juvenal seems to be judicious and well-founded: Ego, si quidquam mihi credendum putatis, non eo usque Juvenalem legendum censeo, nisi quousque casta & Romanâ lectione, plane sumus imbuti: atque hoc eo vobiscum libentius, quo a magistris video minus observari. Lillii G. Gyraldi. De Poet. Dial. iv. p. 179.

* His generosity was equal to his genius. PATRU was reduced to great extremities, and compelled to sell his very valuable library. He not only gave PATRU a larger sum for his books than he could get of any body else, but added to the conditions of the sale, that he should continue to use his library as long as he lived.

2. Is there a Parson, much be-mus'd in beer,
 A maudlin Poetess, a rhyming Peer,
 A Clerk, pre-doom'd his father's soul to cross;
 Who pens a stanza when he should *ingross*?
 Is there, who lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
 With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls?
 All fly to *Twitnam*, and in humble strain
 Apply to me to keep them mad and vain!
 Arthur, whose giddy son neglects the laws,
 Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause*.

BEFORE this epistle was published, Dr. Young addressed two epistles to our author, in the year 1730, concerning the authors of the age; in which are many passages that bear a great resemblance to each other; though Pope has heightened, improved, and condensed the hints and sentiments of Young.

Shall we not censure all the motley train,
 Whether with ale irriguous, or champaign?

* V. 15.

VOL. II.

Q O

Whether

Whether they tread the vale of Prose, or climb,
 And whet their appetites on cliffs of Rhyme;
 The college Sloven, or embroider'd Spark,
 The purple Prelate, or the Parish-clerk,
 The quiet Quidnunc, or demanding Prig,
 The plaintiff Tory, or defendant Whig;
 Rich, poor, male, female, young, old, gay, or sad,
 Whether extremely witty, or quite mad;
 Profoundly dull, or shallowly polite,
 Men that read well, or men that only write:
 Whether peers, porters, taylors, tune their reeds,
 And measuring words to measuring shapes succeeds;
 For bankrupts write, when ruin'd shops are shut,
 As maggots crawl from out a perish'd nut.
 His hammer this, and that his trowel quits,
 And, wanting sense for tradesmen, serve for wits.
 Thus his material, paper, takes it's birth,
 From tatter'd rags of all the stuff on earth †.

3. Seiz'd and ty'd down to judge, how wretched I †!

*Odisti & fugis, ut Drusonem debitor æris;
 Qui, nisi cum tristis misero venere Calendæ,
 Mercedem aut nummo unde unde extricat, amaras
 Porrecto jugulo historias, captivus ut, audit.*

† Epistle on the authors of the age, page 5, 1730.

‡ V. 33.

Few passages in Horace are more full of humour, than this ludicrous punishment of the poor creditor.

4. Nine years! cries he, who high in Drury Lane,
Lull'd by soft zephyrs thro' the broken pane,
Rhymes ere he wakes ———*.

Qui facit in parvâ sublimia carmina cellâ †.

Lo! what from *cellars* rise, what rush from high,
Where Speculation roosted near the sky:
Letters, essays, sock, buskin, satire, song,
And all the *garret* thunders on the throng †!

5. Bless me! a packet—'tis a stranger sues,
A virgin tragedy, an orphan muse.
If I dislike it, furies, death, and rage!
If I approve, commend it to the stage.
Then, thank my stars, my whole commission ends,
The play'rs and I are luckily no friends ‖.

THIS alludes to a tragedy, never acted, but published 1723, called, *The Virgin Queen*,

* V. 41. † Juv. Sat. vii. ‡ Young, Epistle i. p. 4.
‖ V. 55.

284 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

written by Mr. Richard Barford. It is said that he offended Pope, by adopting the machinery of his Sylphs*, in an heroicomical poem, called *The Assembly*, in five cantos, published 1726, and not well received, though the author was reckoned a learned and ingenious man, and patronized by Lord Pembroke.

6. 'Tis sung, when Midas' ears began to spring,
 (Midas, a sacred person, and a king)
 His very minister, who spy'd them first,
 Some say his queen, was forc'd to speak, or burst,
 And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
 When ev'ry coxcomb *perks* them in my face † ?

THE abruptness with which this story from Persius is introduced, occasions an obscurity in the passage; for there is no connexion with the foregoing paragraph. Boileau

* He was jealous that his exquisite machinery should be touched by any other hand. The letters of *M. de Sevigne*, in which the Sylphs are mentioned as invisible attendants, and as interested in the affairs of the ladies, are the 101st, 104th, 195th. See vol. i. of this essay, p. 240, third edition.

† V. 69.

says,

says, Satire ix. v. 221, I have nothing to do with *Chapelain's* honor, or probity, or candor, or civility, or complaisance: but if you hold him up as a model of good writing, and as the king of authors,

Ma bile alors s' echauffe, & je brûle d' écrire;
Et s'il ne m'est permis de le dire au papier;
J'irai creuser la terre, & comme ce *barbier*,
Faire dire aux roseaux par un nouvel organe,
"Midas, le Roi Midas a des oreilles d'Asne."

THERE is more humour in making the prying and watchful eyes of the minister, instead of the barber, first discover the ass's ears; and the word *perks* has particular force and emphasis. Sir *Robert Walpole* and *Queen Caroline* were here pointed at,

7. Who shames a scribbler? break one cobweb thro',
He spins the flight, self-pleasing thread anew:
Destroy his fib or sophistry, in vain!
The creature's at his dirty work again;
Thron'd in the center of his thin designs,
Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines §.

§ V. 89.

THE

286 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

THE *metaphor* † is most happily carried on through a variety of corresponding particulars, that exactly hit the natures of the two *insects* in question. It is not pursued *too far*, nor jaded out, so as to become *quaint* and *affected*, as is the case of many, perhaps, in *Congreve's Comedies*, particularly in the *Way of the World*, and in *Young's Satires*. For instance :

Critics on verse, as *squibs* on triumphs, wait,
Proclaim the glory, and augment the state ;

† Berkley, in his *Alciphron*, Dialogue vi. p. 107, has beautifully employed an image of this sort, on a more serious subject. " To tax or strike at this divine doctrine, on account of things foreign and adventitious, the speculations and disputes of curious men, is, in my mind, an absurdity of the same kind, as it would be to cut down a fine tree, yielding fruit and shade, because its leaves afforded nourishment to caterpillars, or because spiders may now and then weave cobwebs among the branches." Berkley had a brilliant imagination. See his charming description of the island *Inarime*, in *Letters to P.* vol. vii. p. 330. I have been told, that Blackwell received his idea of *Homer*, and of the *reasons* and *causes* of *Homer's* superior excellence, from Berkley, with whom he had been connected.

Hot,

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 287

Hot, envious, noisy, proud, the scribbling fry †,
Burn, hiss, and bounce, waste paper, stink and die ‡.

THE epithets *envious*, and *proud*, have nothing to do with *squibs*. The last line is brilliant and ingenious, but perhaps too much so.

8. There are who to my person pay their court :
I cough like *Horace*, and tho' *lean*, am *short*;
Ammon's great son one shoulder had too high,
Such *Ovid*'s nose, and, Sir, you have an eye §.

THE smallest *personal* particularities are interesting in eminent men. We listen with pleasure to *Montaigne*, when he tells us, "My face is not puff'd, but full, and my complexion between jovial and melancholy, moderately sanguine and hot. In dancing, tennis, or wrestling, I could never arrive at any excellence; in swimming, fencing,

† See also a passage in his two Epistles, where the transmigrations of Proteus are adapted to the various shapes assumed by modern scribblers.

‡ Universal Passion, Sat. iii.

§ V. 115.

vaulting,

268 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

vaulting, and leaping, to none at all. My hands are so clumsy, that I cannot read what I write myself. I cannot handsomely fold up a letter, nor could I ever make a pen, nor carve at table, nor carry a hawk. My sight is perfect and entire, and discovers at a great distance, but is soon weary; which obliges me not to read long, but I am forced to have a person to read to me." Vol. ii. 372.

What passages in Horace are * more agreeable than—

*Me pinguem & nitidum bene curatâ cute vises—
Lusum it Mæcænas, dormitum ego Virgiliusque—
Namque pila lippis inimicum & ludere crudis—
Me primis urbis belli placuisse domique;
Corporis exigui, præcanum, solibus aptum,
Irasci celerem, tamen ut placabilis essem.*

* "My conversation (says Dryden very entertainingly of himself) is slow and dull, my humour saturnine and reserved. In short, I am none of those who endeavour to break jests in company, or make repartees."

Preface to his Indian Emperor.

WHAT

WHAT Addison says in jest, and with his usual humour, is true in fact:—"I have observed that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure, 'till he knows whether the writer of it be a black or fair man, of a mild or cholerick disposition, married or a bachelor." I will add, at the hazard of its being reckoned a trifling and minute remark, that many of our English poets have been in their persons remarkably handsome; such were SPENSER, MILTON, COWLEY, ROWE, ADDISON, CONGREVE, GARTH, GRAY.—VIRGIL and VIDA are said, by LIL. GYRALDUS, to be *facie prope rusticanâ*; and OVID and CARDINAL BEMBO, to be *tenui & vESCO corpore, nervisque compacto*; as also was TIBULLUS.—The portraits of DANTE, PETRARCH, and BOCCACCIO, are thus given, in the curious and entertaining history of their lives by JANNOT. MANETTUS, a celebrated writer of the fifteenth century, but not published till 1746, at Florence. DANTE, he says, was *mediocri & decenti*

staturâ, facie paulum oblongâ, oculis paulo grandioribus, naso aquilino, latis pendentibusque maxillis, inferiori labro aliquantulum quam alterum super eminentiori, colore fusco, capillis ac barba prolixis, nigris, subcrispisque. PETRARCHÆ forma ita decora fuisse dicitur, ut per omnem ætatis partem majestatem quandam præ se ferre videbatur. Tantâ corporis agilitate ac dexteritate prævalebat, ut vix ab aliquo superari posset. Valetudine prosperrina usque ad senectam usus est. Of BOCCACCIO he says, *Habitus corporis ejus obesa fuisse dicitur, staturâ procerâ, rotundiori facie, hilari & jucundo aspectu, sermone ita facetus & comis, ut singulis ejus verbis dum loqueretur summa urbanitas appareret. In amores usque ad maturam fere ætatem vel paulo proclivior.* p. 81..

9. Why did I write? what sin, to me unknown,
 Dipt me in ink, my parents or my own?
 As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
 I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.

I left

I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd *.

BOILEAU says, in his fifth epistle, verse
110, that his father left him a decent patri-
mony, and made him study the law :

Mais bien-tôt amoureux d'un plus noble métier,
Fils, frere, oncle, cousin, beau-frere de Greffier,
Pouvant charger mon bras d'une utile liasse,
J'allay loin du Palais errer sur de Parnasse.
La famille en pâlit, & vit en frémissant,
Dans la Poudre du Greffe un poete naissant.
On vit avec horreur une muse effrenée
Dormir chez un Greffier la grasse matinée †.

10, But why then publish? *Granville* the polite,
And knowing *Walsh*, would tell me I could write;
Well-natur'd ‡ *Garth* inflam'd with early praise,
And *Congreve* lov'd, and *Swift* endur'd my lays :

* V. 125.

† He was a great sleeper; got up late, and always was ac-
customed to sleep after dinner: as also was Pope.

‡ Every word and epithet here used is characteristical, and
peculiarly appropriated to the temper and manner of each of
the persons here mentioned; the elegance of *Lansdown*, the
open free benevolence of *Garth*, the warmth of *Congreve*,
the difficulty of pleasing *Swift*, the very gesture that *Atter-
bury* used when he was pleased, and the animated air and spirit
of *Bolingbroke*.

292 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

The courtly *Talbot*, *Somers*, *Sheffield* read,
 Ev'n mitred *Rocheſter* would nod the head ;
 And *St. John's* ſelf (great *Dryden's* friend before)
 With open arms received one poet more †.

To the *three* firſt names, that encouraged
 his earlieſt writings, he has added other
 friends, whoſe acquaintance with him did
 not commence till he was a poet of eſta-
 bliſhed reputation. From the many com-
 mendations which *Walſh*, and *Garth*, and
Granville beſtowed on *his Paſtorals*, it may
 fairly be concluded how much the public
 taſte has been improved, and with how many
 good compositions our language has been
 enriched, ſince that time. When *Gray*
 publiſhed his exquisite ode on Eton College,
 his firſt publication, little notice was taken
 of it ; but I ſuppoſe no critic can be found,
 that will not place it far above Pope's *Pasto-*
rals.

¶ From theſe the world will judge of men and books,
 Not from the *Burnets*, *Oldmixons*, and *Cooks* §.

† V. 135.

§ V. 145.

SUCH

SUCH authors, especially the two last, are a kind of literary harpies; whatever subject they touch, they debase and defile;

At subitæ horrifico lapsû de montibus adfunt
Harpyiæ, & magnis quatiunt clangoribus alas,
Diripiuntque dapes, *contactûque omnia fædant*
Immundo; tum *vox tetrum dira inter odorem* *.

As to *Burnet*, his character is thus drawn by the very sensible and judicious translator of Polybius, Mr. Hampton, in a pamphlet that deserves to be more known, entitled, *Reflections on Ancient and Modern History*: printed in quarto at Oxford, 1746. "His personal resentment put him upon writing history. He relates the actions of a persecutor and benefactor: and it is easy to believe that a man in such circumstances must violate the laws of truth. The remembrance of his injuries is always present, and gives venom to his pen. Let us add to this, that

* Virg. *Æn.* iii. v. 225.

intemperate

intemperate and malicious curiosity, which penetrates into the most private recesses of vice. The greatest of his triumphs is to draw the veil of secret infamy, and expose to view transactions that were before concealed from the world; though they serve not in the least, either to embellish the style, or connect the series, of his history; and will never obtain more credit, than perhaps to suspend the judgment of the reader, since they are supported only by one single, suspected testimony." P. 28.

12. Yet then did *Gildon* draw his venal quill;
 I wish'd the man a dinner, and sat still:
 Yet then did *Dennis* rave in furious fret;
 I never answer'd, I was not in debt:
 If want provok'd, or madness made them print,
 I wag'd no war with *Bedlam* or the *Mint* †.

THE † unexpected turn in the *second* line

† V. 151.

‡ Ingenio plurimum est in eo, & acerbitas mira, & urbanitas, & vis summa; sed plus stomacho quam consilio dedit. Præterea ut amari sales, ita frequenter amaritudo ipsa ridicula est.

M. F. Quintil. lib. x. c. 1.

of each of these three *couplets*, contains as cutting and bitter strokes of satire, as perhaps can be written.

It is with difficulty we can forgive our author for upbraiding these wretched scribblers for their poverty and distresses, if we do not keep in our minds the grossly abusive pamphlets they published, without previous provocation from him ; and even, allowing this circumstance, we ought to separate *rancour* from *reproof*.

13. Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel grac'd these ribalds,
From *flashing Bentley* ——— †.

SWIFT imbibed from SIR W. TEMPLE, and POPE from SWIFT, an inveterate and unreasonable aversion and contempt for BENTLEY ; whose admirable *Boyle's Lectures, Remarks* on COLLINS, *Emendations* of MENANDER and CALLIMACHUS, and Tully's *Tuscul*.

Disp.; whose edition of HORACE, and above all, *Dissertation* on the Epistles of PHALARIS, (in which he gained the most complete victory over a whole army of wits) all of them exhibit the most striking marks of accurate and extensive erudition, and a vigorous and acute understanding. He degraded himself much by his edition of the *Paradise Lost*, and by his strange and absurd hypothesis of the faults which Milton's amanuensis introduced into that poem. But I have been informed that there was still an additional cause for Pope's resentment; that ATTERBURY, being in company with BENTLEY and POPE, insisted upon knowing the Doctor's opinion of the English Homer; and that, being earnestly pressed to declare his sentiments freely, he said, "The verses are good verses, but the work is not Homer, it is *Spondanius*." It may however be observed, in favour* of Pope, that

* And yet Pope, in a letter which Dr. Rutherford shewed me at Cambridge, in the year 1771, written to a Mr. Bridges, at

that Dr. CLARKE, whose critical exactness is well known, has not been able to point out above three or four mistakes in the sense through the whole Iliad. The real faults of that translation are of a different kind.

14. ————— down to *piddling* Tibalds.

YET this very dull and laborious man was the first publisher of *Shakespear*, that hit upon the true and rational method of correcting and illustrating his author, that is, by reading such books (whatever trash Pope * might call them) as SHAKESPEAR read, and by attending to the genius, learning, and notions of his times †. By pursuing and per-

at Fulham, mentions his consulting Chapman and Hobbes, and talks of "their authority, joined to the knowledge of my own imperfectness in the language, over-ruled me." These are the very words, which I transcribed at that time.

* Pope was irritated at the many blunders in his *Shakespear*, that Theobald pointed out.

† In this manner also has SPENCER been illustrated. See *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, by T. Warton, A. M. London, 1762, 8vo. 2d edit.; and the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer, with incomparable remarks by Mr. *Tyrwhit*.

298 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

fecting which method, the public has lately been presented with a most valuable and complete edition of all his works, by the united labours of such excellent critics as JOHNSON, STEEVENS, TYRWHIT, and MALONE.

15. Each wight, who reads not, and but scans and spells,
Each word-catcher, that lives on syllables §.

It is very easy, but very ungrateful, to laugh at collectors of various readings, and adjusters of texts, those poor pioneers of literature, who drag forward

A waggon-load of meanings for one word,
While *A's depos'd*, and *B* with pomp *restor'd* *.

§ V. 165.

* Many are the ridiculous stories told of the violent contests and quarrels of grammarians and commentators. PHILELPHUS, who married the daughter of EMANUEL CHRYSOLORAS, laid a wager of one hundred crowns with TIMOTHEUS, a Greek grammarian, about the termination of a *tense*; which sum he staked against the long flowing beard of the grammarian; and gaining his wager, absolutely cut off the beard of TIMOTHEUS.

To the indefatigable researches of many a Dutch commentator and German editor, are we indebted for that ease and facility with which we now are enabled to read. "I am persuaded," says BAYLE, "that the ridiculous obstinacy of the first critics, who lavished so much of their time upon the question, whether we ought to say Virgilius or Vergilius, has been ultimately of great use; they thereby inspired men with an extreme veneration for antiquity; they disposed them to a sedulous enquiry into the conduct and character of the ancient Grecians and Romans, and that gave occasion to their improving by those great examples." Dict. tom. v. p. 795. I have always been struck with the following words of a commentator, who was * also a

* MALLET, to gratify Pope, by abusing Bentley, published, about this time, a very feeble and flimsy poem, on *Verbal Criticism*, stuffed with illiberal cant about pedantry, and collators of manuscripts. Real scholars will always speak with due regard of such names as the *Scaligers*, *Salmasius's*, *Heinsius's*, *Burmans*, *Gronovius's*, *Reiskius's*, *Marklands*, *Gessers*, and *Heynes*.

great philosopher, I mean Dr. CLARKE, who thus finishes the preface to his incomparable edition of Homer :

“ LEVIA quidem hæc, & parvi forte, si per se spectentur momenti. Sed ex elementis constant, ex principiis oriuntur, omnia : Et ex judicii consuetudine in rebus *minutis* adhibitâ, pendet sæpissimè in *maximis* vera atque accurata scientia.”

16. Pretty ! in amber to observe the forms

Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms † !

VERY elegant imagery, happily applied ! *Addison* has made a beautiful use of a similar image to a contrary purpose, and to illustrate excellence. “ Shakespear,” says he, *Spectator* 398, “ was born with all the seeds of poetry, and may be compared to the stone in *Pyrrhus's* ring, which, as *Pliny* tells us, had the figure of Apollo and the nine Muses in the veins of it, produced by the spontane-

† V. 169.

ous

ous hand of nature, without any help of art."

17. Did some more sober critic come abroad ;
If wrong, I smil'd ; if right, I kiss'd the rod †.

SUCH he esteemed to be Mr. SPENCE'S judicious Essay on his translation of the *Odysey*; a work of the truest taste, and which POPE was so far from taking amiss, that it was the origin of a lasting friendship betwixt them. I have seen a copy of this work, with marginal observations written in POPE'S own * hand, and generally acknowledging the justness of SPENCE'S observations, and in a few instances pleading, humorously enough, that some favourite lines might be spared. I am indebted to this learned and amiable man,

† V. 171.

* Which do you look upon (says Spence one day to Pope) as the best age of our Poetry? "Why the last, I think; but now the old ones are all gone, and the young seem to have no emulation among them."

on

302 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

on whose friendship I set the greatest value, for most of the anecdotes relating to POPE, mentioned in this work, which he gave me, when I was making him a visit at *Byfleet*, in the year 1754.

18. The bard whom pilfer'd pastorals renown,
Who turns a Persian tale for half a crown *,

And in a line before,

Still to one Bishop PHILIPS seems a wit.

PHILIPS, certainly not a very animated or first-rate writer, yet appears not to deserve quite so much contempt, if we look at his first and fifth pastoral, his epistle from Copenhagen, his ode on the death of Earl Cowper, his translations † of the two first olym-

* V. 180.

† The secret grounds of Philips's malignity to Pope, are said to be the ridicule and laughter he met with from all the Hanover Club, of which he was secretary, for mistaking the incomparable ironical paper in the Guardian, N° 40, which was written by Pope, for a serious criticism on pastoral poetry.

pic

pic odes of Pindar, and the two odes of Sappho, and above all, his pleasing tragedy of the Distrest Mother †.

How far Addison, as hath been insinuated, was concerned in altering and improving Philips's works, cannot now be ascertained. He was accused of reporting that Mr. POPE was an enemy to the government, and that he had a hand in the famous party paper called *The Examiner*.

19. And own'd that nine such poets made a *Tate* †.

YOUNG says, with equal pleasantry, of the same *Nabum Tate*,

He's now a *scribbler*, who was once a *man* *.

† I have heard Mr. Garrick say, that Addison wrote the celebrated epilogue to this tragedy, published in the name of Budgell: that this was a fact he received from some of the Topsons. And Addison is said also to have largely corrected and improved Budgell's translation of Theophrastus.

† V. 190.

• Sat. i.

20. Peace

304 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

20. Peace to all such ! but were there one whose fires
 True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires :
 Blest with each talent and each art to please,
 And born to write, converse, and live with ease :
 Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
 Bear, like the Turk *, no brother near the throne;
 View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
 And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise ;
 Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
 And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer :
 Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
 Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike ;
 Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend,
 A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend ;
 Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieg'd,
 And so obliging that he ne'er oblig'd ;

* This is from Bacon de Augmentis Scient. lib. iiii. p. 186.
 Etsi enim Aristoteles, more Ottomannorum, regnare se haud
 tutè posse putaret, nisi fratres suos omnes contrucidasset.

Which thought, and also that of *Cato's* little senate, are
 used in a letter to Mr. Craggs, dated July 15, 1715. Our
 author frequently has versified passages from his own letters.
 "It is usual with the smaller party to make up in interest
 what they want in number; and this is the case with the
 little senate of *Cato*. We have, it seems, a Great Turk in
 poetry, who can never bear a brother on the throne; and
 has his mutes too, a set of noddies, winkers, and whisperers,
 whose business it is to strangle all other offspring of wit in
 their birth." Vol. vii. p. 300.

Like

Like *Cato*, give his little senate laws,
 And sit attentive to his own applause;
 While wits and Templars ev'ry sentence raise,
 And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
 Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
 Who would not weep, if *Atticus* were he†!

THIS is that famous character of ADDISON *, which has been so much commended for it's wit and poignancy, and so much censured for it's bitterness and malignity. The provocations that induced our author to write it, which he did so early as 1721, though it was not inserted in this epistle till 1733, have been touched upon in the first volume of this essay, at page 160. Since that time, a writer, of the first eminence,

† V. 192.

* Old Jacob Tonson hated Addison. You will see him, says he, one day a Bishop. He intended to have given a translation of all the Psalms, of which design his version of the 23d is a beautiful specimen. Addison used to speak contemptuously of his own account of the English poets, addressed to his old friend *Sacheverell*. It is remarkable, that he declared he had never read *Spencer*, when he gave *his* character in that account.

VOL. II.

R r

who,

who, to a consummate knowledge of the laws, history, and antiquities of his country, joined the most exquisite taste in polite literature, the late much-lamented Sir William Blackstone, drew up, with his usual precision and penetration, a paper that minutely investigated all the facts that have been urged against Addison's conduct to Pope. The chain of his reasoning would be injured, by endeavouring to abridge this paper; I must therefore refer the reader to the second volume of the *Biographia Britannica*, published by Dr. Kippis, page 56, and shall only insert the conclusion of it; which is as follows: "Upon the whole, however Mr. Pope may be excusable for penning such a character of his friend in the first transports of poetical indignation, it reflects no great honour on his feelings, to have kept it in petto for six years, till after the death of Mr. Addison, and then to permit its publication (whether by recital or copy makes no material difference;) and at length,

at

at the distance of 18 years, hand it down to posterity ingrafted into one of his capital productions. Nothing surely could justify so long and so deep a resentment, unless the story be true of the commerce between Addison and Gildon; which will require to be very fully proved, before it can be believed of a gentleman who was so amiable in his moral character, and who (in his own case) had two years before expressly disapproved of a personal abuse upon Mr. Dennis. The person, indeed, from whom Mr. Pope is said to have received this anecdote, about the time of his writing the character (viz. about July 1715) was no other than the Earl of Warwick, son-in-law to Mr. Addison himself; and the something about Wycherley, (in which the story supposes that Addison hired Gildon to abuse Pope and his family) is explained by a note on the *Dunciad*, vol. i. p. 296, to mean a pamphlet containing Mr. Wycherley's life. Now it happens, that in July 1715, the Earl of Warwick (who died

at the age of twenty-three, in August 1721) was only a boy of seventeen, and not likely to be entrusted with such a secret, by a statesman between forty and fifty, with whom it does not appear he was any-way connected or acquainted. For Mr. Addison was not married to his mother the Countess of Warwick till the following year, 1716; nor could Gildon have been employed in July 1715 to write Mr. Wycherley's life, who lived till the December following. As therefore so many inconsistencies are evident in the story itself, which never found its way into print till near sixty years after it is said to have happened, it will be no breach of charity to suppose that the whole of it was founded on some misapprehension in either Mr. Pope or the Earl; and unless better proof can be given, we shall readily acquit Mr. Addison of this most odious part of the charge."

I BEG leave to add, that as to the other accusation, Dr. Young, Lord Bathurst, Mr.

Harte, and Lord Lyttelton, each of them assured me, that Addison himself certainly translated the first book of Homer. Yet I have very lately heard, that some proofs to the contrary have been just discovered.

21. Proud as Apollo on his forked hill,
 Sate full-blown *Bufo*, puff'd by ev'ry quill;
 Fed with soft Dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.
 His library (where busts of poets dead *,
 And a true Pindar stood without a head)
 Receiv'd of wits an undistinguish'd race,
 Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place;
 Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,
 And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat;
 Till, grown more frugal in his riper days,
 He paid some bards with port, and some with praise †.

* The poverty of Butler is often mentioned among the distresses of poets, as a reproach to his age, and particularly to Charles II. who was so fond of Hudibras. But Dr. Pearce, the late Bishop of Rochester, related, that Mr. Lowndes, then belonging to the Treasury, and in the reigns of King William and Queen Anne Secretary to it, assured him, that, by order of King Charles II. he had paid to Butler a yearly pension of 100l. to the time of his decease.—After having been in many important offices, and an Ambassador at Paris, *Prior* had, at one time of his life, nothing left but the income of his fellowship of St. John's college, Cambridge.

† V. 231.

Dr.

310 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

DR. YOUNG's parasites and flatterers are painted with equal humour, and a generous contempt of servility ;

Who'd be a crutch to prop a rotten peer ;
 Or living pendant dangling at his ear ;
 For ever whisp'ring secrets, which were blown,
 For months before, by trumpets thro' the town ?
 Who'd be a glass, with flattering grimace,
 Still to reflect the temper of his face ;
 Or happy pin to stick upon his sleeve,
 When my lord's gracious, and vouchsafes it leave ;
 Or cushion, when his Heaviness shall please
 To loll, or thump it for his better ease ;
 Or a vile butt, for noon or night bespoke,
 When the peer rashly swears he'll club his joke ?
 Who'd shake with laughter, tho' he cou'd not find
 His Lordship's jest, or, if his nose broke wind,
 For blessings to the Gods profoundly bow—
 That can cry chimney-sweep, or drive a plough ?

22. *Dryden* alone * (what wonder ?) came not nigh ;
 Dryden alone escap'd his judging eye ;

But

* Alluding to the subscription that was made for his funeral. Garth spoke an oration over him. His necessities obliged him to produce (besides many other poetical pieces) twenty-seven

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 311

But still, the great have kindness in reserve,
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve †.

OUR poet, with true gratitude, has seized every opportunity of shewing his reverence for his great master, *Dryden*: whom Swift as constantly depreciated and maligned. “ I do affirm (says he, with exquisite irony indeed, in the Dedication of the Tale of a *Tub* to Prince Posterity) upon the word of a sincere man, that there is now actually in being a certain poet, called *John*

seven plays in twenty-five years. He got 25l. for the copy, and 70l. for his benefits generally. Dramatic poetry was certainly not his talent. It is remarkable, that he did not scruple to confess, that he could not relish the pathos and simplicity of Euripides. When he published his fables, Tonson agreed to give him two hundred and sixty-eight pounds for *ten thousand verses*. And, to complete the full number of lines stipulated for, he gave the bookseller the epistle to his cousin, and the divine music ode.—“ Old Jacob Tonson used to say, that Dryden was a little jealous of rivals. He would compliment *Crown* when a play of his failed, but was very cold to him if he met with success. He sometimes used to say that *Crown* had some genius; but then he added always, that his father and *Crown's* mother were very well acquainted.” Mr. Pope to Mr. Spence.

† V. 245.

Dryden,

Dryden, whose translation of Virgil was lately printed in a large folio, well-bound, and, if diligent search were made, for aught I know is yet to be seen." And he attacks him again in the Battle of Books. SHAFTESBURY is also very fond of petulantly carping at Dryden. "To see the incorrigibleness of our poets, in their pedantic manner (says he, vol. iii. p. 276) their vanity, defiance of criticism; their rhodomontade, and poetical bravado; we need only turn to our famous poet-laureat, the very Mr. BAYs himself, in one of his latest and most valued pieces, *Don Sebastian**, writ many years after the ingenious author of the *Rehearsal* had drawn his picture." Shaftesbury's resentment † was excited by the admirable poem

* The dramatic works of *Lope de Vega* make twenty-six volumes, besides four hundred scriptural dramatic pieces, his *Autos Sacramentales*. His biographer affirms, that he often finished a play in twenty-four hours, nay some of his comedies in less than five. He wrote during his life 21,316,000 verses.

† I remember to have heard my father say, that Mr. Elijah Fenton, who was his intimate friend, and had been

poem of *Absalom* and *Achitophel*; and particularly by four lines in it, that related to Lord Ashley, his father;

And all to leave, what with his toil he won,
To that unfeather'd, two-legg'd thing a son;
Got while his soul did huddled notions try,
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.

But Dryden's works will remain, when the
Characteristics will be forgotten.

23. Blest be the Great for those they take away,
And those they left me; for they left me GAY;
Left me to see neglected genius bloom,
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb.
Of all thy blameless life the sole return
My verse, and Queensb'ry weeping o'er thy urn *!

been his master, informed him, that Dryden, upon seeing some of Swift's earliest verses, said to him, "Young man, you will never be a poet." And that this was the cause of Swift's rooted aversion to Dryden, mentioned above. *Baucis* and *Philemon* was so much and so often altered, at the instigation of Addison, that not above eight lines remain as they originally stood. The violence of party disputes never interrupted the sincere friendship that subsisted between Swift and Addison, though of such opposite tempers as well as principles.

V. 255:

VOL. II.

S f

THE

314 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

THE sweetness and simplicity of GAY's temper and manners, much endeared him to all his acquaintance, and make them always speak of him with particular fondness and attachment. He wrote with neatness, and terseness, æquali quâdam mediocritate, but certainly without any elevation; frequently without any spirit. TRIVIA * appears to be the best of his poems, in which are many strokes of genuine humour and pictures of London-life, which hath been much altered and changed within a few years. His fables, the most popular of all his works, have the fault of many modern fable-writers †, the ascribing

* The fable of Cloacina is indelicate. I should think this was one of the hints given him by Swift, to whom he says he was much indebted for many in this poem. Swift himself was indebted, for many hints in his Gulliver, to Bishop Godwin's *Man in the Moon*, or Voyage of Domingo Gonzales, 1638.

† The long and languid introductions to the fables in the second volume (which is indeed much inferior to the first) read like party pamphlets verified. *Dione* has not rescued us from the imputation of having no pastoral-comedy, that can be compared, in the smallest degree, to the *Aminta* or *Pastor Fido*.

ascribing to the different animals and objects introduced, speeches and actions inconsistent with their several natures. An elephant can have nothing to do in a bookseller's shop. They are greatly inferior to the fables of *Fontaine*, which is perhaps the most unrivalled work in the whole French language. The Beggar's Opera has surely been extolled beyond it's merits; I could never perceive that fine vein of concealed satire supposed to run through it; and though I should not join with a bench of Westminster Judges in forbidding it to be represented on the stage, yet I think pickpockets, strumpets, and highwaymen, may be hardened in their vices by this piece; and that *Pope* and *Swift* talked too highly of it's moral good effects. One undesigned and accidental mischief attended it's success: it was the parent of that most

The pastorals were written to ridicule those of *Philips*, and consequently very acceptable to *Pope*. *Polly*, the second part of the Beggar's Opera, though it brought him a good deal of money, above 1200 pounds, being published by subscription, is not equal to the first.

monstrous of all dramatic absurdities, the *Comic Opera*. The friendship of two such excellent personages as the Duke and Dutchess of Queensberry, did, in truth, compensate poor Gay's want of pension * and preferment. They behaved to him constantly with that delicacy, and sense of seeming equality, as never to suffer him for a moment to feel his state of dependence. Let every man of letters, who wishes for patronage, read D'Alembert's *Essay on living with the Great*, before he enters the house of a patron. And let him always remember the fate of Racine, who having drawn up, at Madame Maintenon's † secret request, a me-

* I was informed by Mr. Spence, that Addison, in his last illness, sent to desire to speak with Mr. Gay, and told him he had much injured him; probably with respect to his gaining some appointment from the court: but, said he, if I recover, I will endeavour to recompense you.

† The most exact account of the occasion on which Racine wrote his *Esther* and *Atbaliah*, at the request of Madame Maintenon, for the use of the young ladies at St. Cyr, is to be found in, *Les Souvenirs de Mad. De Caylus*, p. 183. There also are some very interesting and authentic particulars of the life of *Mad. Maintenon*.

mo-ri-al

morial that strongly painted the distresses of the French nation, the weight of their taxes, and the expences of the court, she could not resist the importunity of Lewis XIV. but shewed him her friend's paper: against whom the king immediately conceived a violent indignation, because a poet should dare to busy himself with politics. Racine had the weakness to take this anger of the king so much to heart, that it brought on a low fever, which hastened his death. The Dutchess of Queensberry would not have so betrayed her poetical friend Gay.

24. Curs'd be the verse, how well foe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give virtue scandal, innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-ey'd virgin steal a tear *!

M. DESPREAUX s'applaudissoit fort à l'age de soixante & onze ans, de n'avoir rien mis dans ses vers qui choquât les bonnes mœurs. C'est une consolation, disoit il, pour les vieux

318 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

poetes, qui doivent bientôt rendre compte à Dieu de leurs actions. Tom. v. 4.

HAPPY indeed was the poet, of whom his worthy and amiable * friend could so truly say, that in all his works was not to be discovered

One line, that dying, he could wish to blot!

WOULD to God, said AVERROES (regretting the libertinism of some verses which he had made in his youth) I had been born old!

FONTAINE and CHAUCER, dying, wisht unwrote
The sprightliest effort of their wanton thought:
SIDNEY and WALLER, brightest sons of fame,
Condemn'd the charm of ages to the flame †.

25. Let Sporus tremble—What! that king of filk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk?

* Lord Lyttelton, in the Prologue to Thomson's *Coriolanus*.

† Young's *Epistle to Authors*.

Satire

Satire or sense, alas ! can Sporus feel ?
 Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel ?—
 Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
 This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings ;
 Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
 Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys ;
 So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
 In mumbling of the game they cannot bite.
 Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
 As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
 Whether in *florid impotence* he speaks,
 And as the prompter breathes the puppet squeaks,
 Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad *,
 Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad.
 In puns, or politics, or tales, or lyes,
 Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.—
 Amphibious thing ! that acting either part,
 The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
 Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
 Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.

* It is but justice (said Pope in the first edition) to own that the hint of Eve and the Serpent was taken from the verses to the Imitator of Horace—

- “ When God created thee, one would believe
- “ He said the same as to the snake of Eve ;
- “ To human race antipathy declare,
- “ Twixt them and thee be everlasting war.
- “ But oh ! the sequel of the sentence dread,
- “ And whilst you bruise their heel, beware your head.”

Eve's

320 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

*Eve's tempter thus, the rabbins have exprest,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest,
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust †.*

LANGUAGE cannot afford more glowing or more forcible terms to express the utmost bitterness of contempt. We think we are here reading MILTON against SALMASIUS. The raillery is carried to the very verge of *railing*, some will say *ribaldry*. He has armed his muse with a scalping-knife. The portrait is certainly *over-charged*: for Lord H. for whom it was designed, whatever his morals might be, had yet considerable abilities, though marred indeed by affectation. Some of his speeches in parliament were much beyond *florid impotence*. They were indeed in favour of Sir R. Walpole*, and this was sufficiently offensive to Pope. The fact

† V. 305.

* He fought a duel with Mr. Pulteney upon a political quarrel.—See also a pamphlet, entitled, *The Court Secret*, occasioned by Lord Scarborough's death, for a severe character of *Abraham*, intended for this Lord. Printed 8vo. 1741.

that particularly incited his indignation, was Lord H's *Epistle to a Doctor of Divinity*, (Dr. Sherwin) *from a Nobleman at Hampton Court*, 1733; as well as his having been concerned with Lady M. W. M. * in *Verses to the Imitator of Horace*, 1732. This lady's beauty, wit, genius, and travels, of which she gave an account in a series of elegant and entertaining letters, very characteristical of the manners of the Turks, and of which many are addressed to Pope; are well known, and justly celebrated. With both these noble personages had Pope lived in a state of intimacy. And justice obligeth us to confess, that he himself was the aggressor in the

* After her quarrel with Mr. Pope, which Lord Peterborough in vain endeavoured to reconcile, she wrote thus from Florence, to the Countess of ——— “The word malignity; and a passage in your letter, call to my mind the wicked wasp of Twickenham; his lyes affect me now no more; they will be all as much despised as the story of the seraglio and the handkerchief, of which I am persuaded he was the only inventor. That man has a malignant and ungenerous heart; and he is base enough to assume the mask of a moralist, in order to decry human nature, and to give a decent vent to his hatred of man and womankind.”

322 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

quarrel with them; as he first assaulted and affronted Lord H. by these two lines in his imitation of the 1st Sat. of Horace's second book,

The lines are weak, another's pleas'd to say,
Lord Fanny *spins* a thousand such a day.

And Lady M. W. M. by the eighty-third *line* of the same piece, too *gross* * to be here repeated.

IT is a singular circumstance, that our author's indignation was so vehement and inexhaustible, that it furnished him with another invective, of equal power, in prose, which is to be found at the end of the eighth volume, containing his letters. The reader that turns to it, page 253 (for it is too long to be here inserted, and too full of

* So also are lines 87, 88, 89, 90 of the third epistle concerning Fulvia and old Narses. But let us remember, that,

As the soft plume gives swiftness to the dart,
Good-breeding sends the satire to the heart, *YOUNG.*

matter to be abridged) will find, that it abounds in so many new modes of irony, in so many unexpected strokes of sarcasm, in so many sudden and repeated blows, that he does not allow the poor devoted peer a moment's breathing-time ;

Nunc dextrâ ingeminans ictus, nunc ille sinistrâ ;
Nec mora, nec requies ; quam multâ grandine nimbi
Culminibus crepitant ; sic densis ictibus heros
Creber utrâque manû pulsât, versatque —*.

It is indeed the master-piece of *invective*, and perhaps excels the character of *Sporus* itself, capital as that is, above quoted. Yet who would wish to be the author of such an invective? But can this be the nobleman (we are apt to ask) whom *Middleton*, in his dedication to the History of the Life of Tully, has so seriously and earnestly praised, for his strong good sense, his consummate politeness, his real patriotism, his rigid temperance, his thorough knowledge and de-

* *Æn.* v. ver. 456.

324 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

fence of the laws of his country, his accurate skill in history, his hospitality, his unexampled and unremitted diligence in literary pursuits, who added credit to this very history, as Scipio and Lælius did to that of Polybius, by revising and correcting it? and brightening* it, as he expresses it, by the strokes

* The life of Tully procured Dr. Middleton a great reputation, and a great sum of money. It is a pleasing and useful work, especially to younger readers, as it gives a comprehensive view of a most interesting period in the Roman history, and of the characters principally concerned in those important events. It may be worth observing, that he is much indebted, without acknowledging it, to a curious book little known, entitled, *G. Bellendini, Scoti, de Tribus Luminibus Romanorum, Libri 16. Parisiis. Apud Tassanum du Bray, 1634. Folio*; dedicated to King Charles. It comprehends a history of Rome, from the foundation of the city to the time of Augustus, drawn up in the very words of *Cicero*, without any alteration of any expression. In this book *Middleton* found every part of *Cicero's* own history, in his own words, and his works arranged in chronological order, without farther trouble. The impression of this work being shipped for England, was lost in the vessel, which was cast away, and only a few copies remained, that had been left in France. I only add, that the style of *Middleton*, which is commonly esteemed very *pure*, is blemished with many *vulgar* and *cant* terms. Such as *Pompey had a month's mind*, &c. He has not been successful in the translations of those many epistles of Tully which he has inserted; which, however curious, yet break the thread of the narration.

strokes of his pencil? The man that had written this splendid encomium on Lord H. could not, we may imagine, be very well affected to the bard who had painted Lord Fanny in so ridiculous a light. We find him writing thus to Dr. Warburton, Jan. 7, 1740: "You have evinced the *orthodoxy* of Mr. Pope's principles; but, like the old Commentators on his Homer, will be thought perhaps, in some places, to have found a meaning for him, that he himself never dreamt of. However, if you did not *find* him a *philosopher*, you will *make* him one; for he will be wise enough to take the benefit of your reading, and make his future essays more *clear* and *consistent*."

26. That not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to *Truth*, and moraliz'd his song*.

narration. *Mongault* and *Melmoth* have far exceeded him in their excellent translations of these pieces, which are, after all, some of the most precious remains of antiquity. What a treasure would it have been, if the letters of Tully to Julius Cæsar had remained!

* V. 340.

HERE

326 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

HERE is our author's own declaration, delivered in the most precise and positive terms, that he early left the *more poetical* provinces of his art, to become a moral, didactic, and satiric poet.

27. Of gentle blood * (part shed in honour's cause,
While yet in Britain honour had applause)
Each parent sprung ; what fortune pray their own,
And better got than Bestia's from the throne.

* When Mr. Pope published the notes on the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, giving an account of his family, Mr. Pottinger, a relation of his, observed, that his cousin Pope had made himself out a fine pedigree, but he wondered where he got it; that he never had heard any thing himself of their being descended from the Earls of Down; and, what is more, he had an old maiden aunt, equally related, a great genealogist, who was always talking of her family, but never mentioned this circumstance; on which she certainly would not have been silent, had she known any thing of it. Mr. Pope's grandfather was a clergyman of the church of England, in Hampshire. He placed his son, Mr. Pope's father, with a merchant at Lisbon, where he became a convert to Popery. (Thus far Dr. Bolton, late Dean of Carlisle, a friend of Pope, from *Mr. Pottinger*.) The burying-place and monuments of the family of the Popes, Earls of Down, is at Wroxton, Oxfordshire. The Earl of Guildford says, that he has seen and examined the pedigree and descents of that family, and is sure that there were then none of the name of Pope left, who could be descended from that family.—(From *John Lousday, of Caversham, Esquire*.)

Born

Born to no pride, inheriting no strife,
 Nor marrying discord in a noble wife;
 Stranger to civil and religious rage,
 The good man walk'd innoxious thro' his age.
 No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
 Nor dar'd an oath, nor hazarded a lye.
 Unlearn'd, he knew no schoolman's subtle art;
 No language, but the language of the heart.
 By nature honest, by experience wise,
 Healthy by temp'rance, and by exercise;
 His life, tho' long, to sickness past unknown,
 His death was instant, and without a groan *.

BOILEAU †, who has been so frequently quoted, because he was the model of our author, speaks thus of his father and family,

* V. 388.

† He had no asperity in his temper. Mad. de Sevigné used to say, he is cruel only in verse. Being punctual in performing all acts of religion, he was one day in the country, and went to confession to a priest who did not know him. What is your occupation? said the good man.—To make verses, replied Boileau.—So much the worse, said the Priest.—And what sort of verses?—Satires.—Still worse and worse, said the confessor.—And against whom?—Against those, said Boileau, who make bad verses; against such mischievous works as operas and romances.—Ah! my friend, says the Confessor, there is no harm in this, and I have nothing more to say to you.

Memoires de J. Racine, p. 196.

in

328 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

in an epistle that was justly one of his favourite works, addressed (in imitation of Horace's *Vertamnum Janumque*) to his verses:

Que si quelqu'un, mes vers, alors vous importune,
 Pour scavoir mes parens, ma vie & ma fortune,
 Contès-lui, qu' allié d'assès hauts Magistrats,
 Fils d'un Pere Greffier; né d'ayeux Avocats;
 Dès le berceau perdant une fort jeune mere,
 Reduit seize ans après à pleurer mon vieux Pere;
 J'allai d'un pas hardi, par moi-mesme guidé,
 Et de mon seul Genie en marchant secondé,
 Studieux amateur, & de Perse & d'Horace,
 Assès près de Regnier m'asseoir sur le Parnasse;
 Que par un coup de sort au grand jour amené
 Et de bords du Permesse à la Cour entraîné,
 Je sceûs, prenant l'effor par de routes nouvelles
 Eslever assès haut mes poetiques ailes;
 Que ce Roy * dont le nom fait trembler tant de Rois
 Voulut

* He was appointed Historiographer to the King, with Racine, in October 1677. They both, together with Vander-Meulen, the painter, accompanied Lewis XIV. in his pompous expedition to Flanders. After the death of Racine, he went once to Versailles, to inform the King of the death of his colleague; and when he took his leave, Louis obligingly said to him, shewing him his watch, which he happened to hold in his hand, "Remember that I have always one hour in the week to give you, whenever you will come to me."

Voulut bien que ma main crayonnait ses exploits :
 Que plus d'un grand m'aima jusques à la tendresse ;
 Que ma veüe a Colbert inspiroit, l'allegresse ;
 Qu' aujourd'hui mesme encor de deux sens affoibli
 Retiré de la cour & non mis en oubli ;
 Plus d'un Heros epris des fruits de mon estude,
 Vient quelquefois ches moi goûter la solitude †.

ALL these particularities of his father, family, and fortunes, become interesting. There is in this passage the true manner of Horace, his easy vigour, and *firma facilitas*. It is on occasion of this epistle that Boileau wrote his celebrated letter to *Mons. de Maucroix*, from which I shall, without any scruple, give a large extract, as it is so replete with good sense and solid criticism, and contains so many observations on the

It is to be regretted that Boileau never finished, what he told his friends he had sketched out, the life of Diogenes the Cynic, a comic romance, in which much literature, satire, and knowledge of life and manners, would have appeared. Let me take this occasion of adding, that it is also to be regretted, that Montesquieu never finished a political romance he intended to give, called *Arfaces*.

† Epître x. ver. 93.

330 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

more remote and interior beauties of style:
Tom. iii. p. 185. Par M. de Saint Marc.
1747.

RACAN excelle sur tout, à mon avis, à dire les petites choses, & c'est en quoi il ressemble mieux aux anciennes, que j'admire sur tout par cet endroit. Plus les choses sont seches & mal aisées à dire en vers, plus elle frappent quand elles sont dites noblement, & avec cette élégance qui fait proprement la poésie. Je me souviens que M. de la Fontaine m'a dit plus d'une fois, que les deux vers de mes ouvrages qu'il estimoit davantage c'estoit ceux où je loue le Roi d'avoir établi la manufacture des points de France, à la place des points de Venise. Les voici. C'est dans la premiere Epistre à sa Majesté.

Et nos voisins frustrez de ces tributs serviles,
Que payoit à leur art le luxe de nos villes.

VIRGILE & Horace sont divins en cela,
aussi bien qu' Homere. C'est tout le contraire

traire de nos Poètes, qui ne disent que des choses vagues, que d'autres ont déjà dites avant eux, & dont les expressions sont trouvées. Quand ils sortent de là, ils ne sauraient plus s'exprimer, & ils tombent dans une secheresse qui est encore pire que leurs larcins. Pour moy, je ne sçay pas si j'y ay réussi : mais quand je fais des vers, je songe toujours à dire ce qui ne s'est point encore dit en nostre langue. C'est ce que j'ay principalement affecté dans une nouvelle epistre, que j'ay faite à propos de toutes les Critiques, qu'on a imprimées contre ma dernière satire. J'y conte tout ce que j'ay fait depuis que je suis au monde, j'y rapporte mes defauts, mon âge, mes inclinations, mes mœurs. J'y dis de quel Pere & de quelle Mere je suis né. J'y marque les degrés de ma fortune ; comment j'ay esté à la cour, comment j'en suis sorti ; les incommodes qui me sont survenuës ; les ouvrages que j'ay faits. Ce sont bien de petites choses dites

en affés peu de mots, puisque la piece n'a pas plus de cent trente vers. Elle n'a pas encore veu le jour, & je ne l'ay pas mesme encore écrite. Mais il me paroist que tous ceux à qui je l'ay recitée, en sont aussi frappez que d'aucun autre de mes ouvrages. Croiriez-vous, Monsieur, qu'un des endroits où ils se recrient le plus, c'est un endroit qui ne dit autre chose, sinon qui aujourd'huy que j'ai cinquante-sept ans, je ne dois plus pretendre à l'approbation publique. Cela est dit en quatre vers que je veux bien vous écrire ici, afin que vous me mandiez si vous les approuvez.

Mais aujourd'hui qu' enfin la Vieillesse venue,
Sous mes faux cheveux blonds déjà toute chenue,
A jetté sur ma teste avec ses doigts pesans,
Onze lustres complets surchargez de deux ans.

Il me semble que la Perruque est affés heureusement frondée dans ces quatres vers.

28. O friend ! may each domestic bliss be thine !
 Be no unpleasing melancholy mine !
 Me, let the tender office long engage,
 To rock the cradle of reposing age * ;
 With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
 Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death ;
 Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
 And keep awhile one parent from the sky † !

THESE exquisite lines give us a very interesting picture of the exemplary filial piety of our † author. There is a pensive and pathetic sweetness in the very flow of them. The eye that has been wearied and oppressed by the harsh and austere colouring of some of the preceding passages, turns away with pleasure from these asperities, and reposes with complacency on the soft tints of do-

* See a letter to Mr. Richardson, desiring him to come to Twickenham, and take a sketch of his mother, just after she was dead; June 20, 1733. "It would afford, says he, the finest image of a saint expired, that ever painting drew." Vol. viii. p. 233.

† V. 406.

‡ For which also another truly great poet was remarkable. See *Memoirs of Mr. Gray's Life*, passim.

334 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

mestic tenderness. We are naturally gratified to see great men descending from their heights, into the familiar offices of common life; and the sensation is the more pleasing to us, because *admiration* is turned into *affection*. In the very entertaining memoirs of the life of Racine (published by his son) we find no * passage more amusing and interesting, than where that great poet sends an excuse to Monr. the Duke, who had earnestly invited him to dine at the Hotel de Conde, because he had promised to partake of a great fish that his children had got for him, and he could not think of disappointing them.

MELANCTHON appeared in an amiable light, when he was seen, one day, holding a book in one hand, and attentively reading,

* Memoires sur la Vie de Jean Racine, p. 182, printed 1747: by the author of the didactic poems on *Religion* and *Grace*, of *Reflections on Poetry*, of *Two Epistles on Man*, and some excellent *Sacred Odes*, particularly one from Isaiah, c. xiv.

and

and with the other rocking the cradle of his
infant child. And we read with more satis-
faction,

—• ὁ παῖδος οριζατο φαιδιμος Εκτωρ,
Αψ δ' ὁ παῖς προς καλπον ευζωνοιο τιθητης
Εκλυθη ιαχων—•

than we do,

Τρις μιν οριζα' ιων το δε τετρατον ικτο τιμων
Αιγας—†.

• Iliad vi. v. 467.

† Iliad xiii. v. 20.

SECT.

S E C T. XII.

Of the *Satires* and *Epistles* of *Horace* imitated, of the *Satires* of *Donne* versified, and of the *Epilogue* to the *Satires*.

“ **W**HEN I had a fever one winter in town (said POPE to Mr. SPENCE) that confined me to my room for five or six days, Lord BOLINGBROKE came to see me, happened to take up a Horace that lay on the table, and in turning it over, dipt on the first satire of the second book. He observed, how well that would suit my case, if I were to imitate it in English. After he was gone, I read it over, translated it in a morning or two, and sent it to press in a week or fortnight after. And this was the occasion of my
“ imitating

“ imitating some other of the Satires and
 “ Epistles. To how casual a beginning (adds
 “ SPENCE) are we obliged, for the most de-
 “ lightful things in our language! When
 “ I was saying to him, that he had already
 “ imitated near a third part of Horace’s sa-
 “ tires and epistles, and how much it was to
 “ be wished that he would go on with them;
 “ he could not believe that he had gone near
 “ so far; but upon computing it, it appeared
 “ to be above a third. He seemed on this not
 “ disinclined to carry it farther; but his last
 “ illness was then growing upon him, and
 “ robbed us of him, and of all hopes of that
 “ kind, in a few months *”.

No part of our author’s works have been
 more admired than these imitations. The
 aptness of the allusions, and the happiness of
 many of the parallels, give a pleasure that is
 always no small one to the mind of a reader,
 the pleasure of *comparison*. He that has the

* Transcribed from Spence’s *Anecdotes*, 1754.

338 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

least acquaintance with these pieces of Horace, which resemble the *Old Comedy*, immediately perceives, indeed, that our author has assumed a higher tone, and frequently has deserted † the free colloquial air, the insinuating Socratic manner of his original. And that he clearly resembles in his style, as he did in his natural temper, the severe and serious Juvenal, more than the smiling and sportive Horace. Let us select some passages, in which he may be thought to have equalled, excelled, or fallen short of, the original; the latter of which cannot be deemed a disgrace to our poet, or to any other writer, if we consider the extreme difficulty of transfusing into another language the subtle beauties of Horace's dignified *familiarity*, and the uncommon union of so much *facility* and *force*.

† After all that has been said of Horace, by so many critics, ancient and modern, perhaps no words can describe him so exactly and justly, as the following of Tully, spoken on another subject. Lib. i. de Oratore. Accedit lepos quidam, facetiæque, & eruditio libero digna, celeritasque & brevis res pondendi & laceffendi subtili venustate & urbanitate conjuncta.

I. — Trebati

1. ————— Trebati
 Quid faciam? prescribe. T. Quiescas. H. Ne faci-
 am, inquis,
 Omnino versus? T. Aiò. H. Peream male, si non
 Optimum erat: verum nequeo dormire. T. Ter uncti
 Transsanto Tiberim, somno quibus est opus alto;
 Irriguumve mero sub noctem corpus habento*:

Tinn'rous by nature, of the rich in awe,
 I come to counsel learned in the law:
 You'll give me, like a friend, both sage and free
 Advice; and as you use, without a fee.
 F. I'd write no more. P. Not write? but then I think,
 And for my soul I cannot sleep a wink.
 I nod in company, I wake at night,
 Fools rush into my head, and so I write.
 F. You could not do a worse thing for your life:
 Why, if the night seem tedious, take a wife.
 Or rather truly, if your point be rest,
 Lettuce and cowslip-wine: probatum est.
 But talk with Celsus, Celsus will advise,
 Hartshorn, or something that shall close your eyes †.

HORACE, with much seeming seriousness,
 applies for advice to the celebrated Roman
 lawyer, *C. Trebatius Testa*, an intimate friend

* Sat. i. lib. 1. v. 4.

† V. 8.

340 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

of *Julius Cæsar*, and of *Tully*, as appears from many of his epistles to *Atticus*. The gravity and self-importance of whose character is admirably supported throughout this little drama. His answers are short, authoritative, and decisive. *Quiescas. Aio*. And, as he was known to be a great *drinker* and *swimmer*, his two absurd pieces of advice have infinite pleasantry. All these circumstances of humour are dropt in the copy. The Lettuce and Cowslip-wine are insipid and unmeaning prescriptions, and have nothing to do with Mr. *Fortescue*'s character. The third, fourth, and ninth lines of this *imitation* are flat and languid. We must also observe (from the old Commentator*) that the verbs *transnanto*, and *habento*, are, in the very style of the Roman law, "Vide ut

* There are many excellent remarks in *Acro* and *Porphyrio*; from whom, as well as from *Cruquius*, *Dacier* has borrowed much, without owning it. *Dacier*'s translation of Horace is not equal to his *Aristotle*'s Poetics. In the former, he is perpetually striving to discover new meanings in his author, which Boileau called, The Revelations of *Dacier*.

directis

directis jurisconsultorum verbis utitur ad
Treatium jurisconsultum.

2. Aut si tantus amor scribendi te rapit, aude
Cæsar's invicti res dicere, multa laborum
Præmia laturus——*

Or, if you needs must write, write Cæsar's praise,
You'll gain at least a *knighthood*, or *the bays* †.

THIS is superior to the original, because
præmia laturas is general and flat, in compa-
rison of the particular rewards here speci-
fied.

3. —neque enim quivis horrentia pilis †
Agmina, nec fractâ pereuntes cuspide Gallos,
Aut labentis equo describat vulnera Parthi §.

What ! like Sir Richard, rumbling, rough, and fierce,
With ARMS, and GEORGE, and BRUNSWICK crowd
the verse,

* V. 10. † V. 21.

† Of these verses says *Porphyrio*, Eleganter in hac ipsâ
excusatione, posse se scribere ostendit.

§ V. 13.

Rend

342 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Read with tremendous sound your ears asunder,
With gun, drum, trumpet, blunderbuss, and thunder.

POPE has turned the compliment to Augustus into a severe sarcasm. All the wits* seem to have leagued against Sir Richard Blackmore. In a letter now lying before me, from ELIJAH FENTON to my father, dated, Jan. 24, 1707, he says, "I am glad to hear Mr. Phillips will publish his POMONA: Who prints it? I should be mightily obliged to you, if you could get me a copy of *his verses against* Blackmore." As the letter contains one or two literary particulars, I will transcribe the rest. "As

* *Swift* never could forgive *Blackmore* the following strictures on a Tale of a Tub, in his essays, London, 1717. "Had this writing been published in a Pagan or Popish nation, who are justly impatient of all indignity offered to the established religion of their country, no doubt but the author would have received the punishment he deserved. But the fate of this *impious buffoon* is very different; for in a Protestant kingdom, zealous of their civil and religious immunities, he has not only escaped affronts, and the effects of public resentment, but he has been caressed and patronized by persons of great figure, and of all denominations."

to what you write about making a collection, I can only advise you to buy what poems you can, that *Tonson* has printed, except the *Ode to the Sun*; unless you will take it in, because I writ it; which I am the freer to own, that *Mat. Prior* may not suffer in his reputation, by having it ascribed to him. My humble service to *Mr. Sacheverell*, and tell him I will never imitate *Milton* more, till the author of *Blenheim* is forgotten." In vain was Blackmore extolled by *Molyneux* and *Locke*: but *Locke*, to his other superior talents, did not add a good taste. He affected to despise poetry, and he depreciated the ancients; which circumstance, as I am informed from undoubted authority, was the source of perpetual discontent and dispute betwixt him and his pupil Lord *Shaftesbury*; who, in many parts of the *Characteristicks*, has ridiculed *Locke's* philosophy, and endeavoured to represent him as a disciple of *Hobbes*; from which
 writer,

344 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

writer, however, it is certain that *Locke* borrowed frequently and largely.

4. ————— nifi dextro tempore, Flacchi
Verba per attentam non ibunt Cæsar's aurem.
Cui male si palperè recalcitrât undique tutus*.

Alas ! few verses touch their nicer ear,
They scarce can bear their *Laureate* twice a year.
And justly Cæsar scorns the poet's lays ;
It is to *History* he trusts for praise †.

SUPERIOR to the original, on account of the mention of the *Laureate*; and the sudden unexpected turn in the last line, which is uncommonly *fly* and *severe*.

5. Quid faciam ? saltat Milonius, &c. ‡

Each mortal has his pleasure §.

THESE words, indeed, open the sense of Horace ; but the *quid faciam* is better, as it leaves it to the reader to discover what is one of Horace's greatest beauties, his secret

* V. 18. † V. 33. ‡ V. 24. § V. 45.

and

and delicate *transitions* and *connections*, to which they who do not carefully attend, lose half the pleasure of reading him.

5. ————— none deny
 ————— *Darty* his ham-pye*.

LYTTELTON, in his Dialogues of the Dead, has introduced *Darteneuf*, in a pleasant discourse betwixt him and *Apicius*, bitterly lamenting his ill fortune, in having lived before *turtle-feasts* † were known in England. “Alas!” says he, “how imperfect is human felicity! I lived in an age when the pleasure of eating was thought to be carried to its highest perfection in England and France. And yet a turtle-feast is a novelty to me! Would it be impossible, do you think, to obtain leave from Pluto, of going back for one day, just to taste of that food? I would

* V. 45.

† He might have said the same of the *Chinese Bird's Nest*, a piece of Oriental luxury lately imported.

346 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

promise to kill myself by the quantity I would eat before the next morning."

6. Castor gaudet equis; ovo prognatus eodem,
Pugnis —————*.

F. loves the senate, Hockley-hole his brother,
Like in all else, as one egg to another †.

THIS parallel is not happy and exact; to shew the variety of human passions and pursuits, Castor and Pollux were unlike, even though they came from one and the same egg. This is far more extraordinary and marvellous than that two common brothers should have different inclinations.

7. —Me pedibus delectat claudere verba,
Lucili ritu —————†.

I love to pour out all myself, as plain
As downright *Shippen*, or as old *Montaigne* §.

"My chief pleasure is to write satires like Lucilius," says Horace. "My chief

* V. 26.

† V. 49.

‡ V. 28.

§ V. 51.

pleasure,

pleasure, says Pope, is,—What? *to speak my mind freely and openly.*” There should have been an instance of some *employment*, and not a virtuous *habit*; there follows in the original, a line which *Bentley* has explained very acutely, and in a manner different from the other commentators—

———— neque si malè gesserat, usquam
Decurrens alio, neque si bene—*.

HE affirms, that the true reading should be malè *cesserat*, and that it does not mean, whether his *affairs* went ill or not, but whether he *wrote* successfully or not. “Nusquam alio præterquam ad libros decurrens, seu benè ei cesserat in *scribendo*, seu malè. Scilicet quovis ille die scribere amabat, sive aptus tum ad studium, seu, ut sæpe usû venit, ineptior: seu musis faventibus sive averfis.”

THE passage that immediately follows, in the original, at verse the thirty-fifth,—

* V. 31.

Y y 2

Nam

348 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Nam Venusinus arat — down to verse the thirty-ninth, to the words, incuteret violenta, which are frequently printed in a parenthesis, and have been supposed to be an awkward interpolation, were undoubtedly intended by Horace to represent the loose, incoherent, and verbose manner * of Lucilius (incomposito pede) who loaded his satires with many useless and impertinent thoughts.

8. ————— O Pater & Rex,
Jupiter, ut pereat positum rubigine telum †.

Save but our *army*! and let Jove incrust
Swords, pikes, and guns, with everlasting rust †!

He could not suffer so favourable an opportunity to pass, without joining with his friends, the patriots of that time, in the cry

* ——— amat scripsisse ducentos
Ante cibum versus, totidem cœnatus —
Hor. sat. x. lib. i. v. 61.

Ad. Baillet, among his numerous blunders and false judgments, is so absurd, as to take literally the expression of Lucilius—Stans pede in uno.

† V. 42. † V. 73.

against

against a standing army. The sentiment in the original is taken, as the old scholiast observes, from *Callimachus* ;

Ζευ πατερ, ὡς χαλῶν παν ἀπολοῖτο * γειος.

NUMBERLESS are the passages in Horace, which he has skilfully adopted and interwoven from the Greek writers ; with whom he was minutely and intimately acquainted ; perhaps more so than any other Roman poet, having studied at Athens longer than any of them.

* He imitates two other epigrams of Callimachus, in verse 8. of the 2d Sat. lib. 1.

Præclaram ingrata stringat malus ingluvie rem—

and also, as Heinſius observes, in the 105th verse of the same satire——

Leporem venator ut altâ

In nive ſectatur——

In the sixth satire of the second book, he has *Sophocles* in his eye ;

Luſerat in campo fortunæ filius——

Εγω δ' ἑαυτοῦ παιδα τῆς τύχης ἤμην.

Œdip. Tyrann. 1090.

Quidquid

350 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Quidquid sub terrâ est in apricum proferet ætas
Defodiet condetque nitentia—— *

is from the Oedipus of Sophocles, verse 659.

Απανθ' ὁ μακρὸς καναριθμητὸς χρόνος
Φυεῖ τ' ἀθλὰ, καὶ φανερὰ κρυπτεται.

Pernicies & *Tempestas*, Barathrumque macelli —— †

GROTIUS, in that very entertaining book, his *Excerpta ex Tragædiis & Comædiis Græcis*, has preserved, page 583, a fragment of *Alexis*, to which this passage of Horace alludes :

Δειπνὴ δ' αὖφωτος Τηλεφός, νινῶν μοῖραν
Πρὸς τῆς ἐπερωτῶντας τι, ὥς πολλὰ κίς
Αὐτοὺς κικληκώς τοῖς Σαμβραξίῳ εὐχεται
Ληξαι πνέοντα καὶ γαληνισαὶ ποτὶ.
Χερμῶν ὁμειρανίσκος ἴσσι τοῖς φίλοις.

Per mare pauperiem fugiens, per faxa, per ignes ‡,
is from *Theognis* ;

Ἡ δὲ χερὶ φευγοντα καὶ εἰς μεγακητεῖα πόλον
ΡΙπίνῳ, καὶ πετρῶν, Κυρὴν κατ' ἡλιβατων.

* Ep. vi. v. 24.
lib. i. 46.

† V. 31. ep. 15.

‡ Ep. i.

Sunt

Sunt verba & voces quibus hunc lenire dolorem
Possis, & magnam morbi deponere partem *,

is from the Hippolitus of Euripides ;

Εἰσιν δ' ἐπῶδαι καὶ λόγοι θελκτικοί.

— Si quid novisti rectius istis
Candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum †,

is taken, as *Cruquius* remarks, from *Isocrates*
to *Nicocles* ;

Κρῶ τοῖς ἐξημείοις, ἢ ζήτει βελτίω τούτων.

Spes jubet esse ratas, in prælia trudit inermem ‡,

from an elegant fragment of *Diphilus* ; in
which Bacchus is addressed :

ὦ παῖς, τοῖσι φρονέσι προσφιλέστατε,
Διόνυσε καὶ σοφώτατ' ὡς ἡδὺς τις ἐγὼ
Ὅταν ταπεινοὶ μέγα φρονεῖν ποιεῖς ἄνθρωποι,
Τὸν τὰι ὄφρυς αἰροντα συμπειθεὶς γυλαῖν,
Τὸν τ' ἀσθενὴ τόλμαν τι, τὸν δειλὸν θρασύν.

The bold and beautiful metaphor in the
fourth ode of the fourth book,

* Ep. i. lib. 1. ver. 35. † Ep. vi. 67. ‡ V. 17. Ep. 5.
Per

352 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Per Siculas *equitavit* undas,

is from the *Phænissæ* of *Euripides*, verse 222, (the Oxford edition in 4to. by Dr. Musgrave, 1778,)

Ζεφύρου πνοαίς

ἰππιουσάντος ἐν ὕδασι—

The beginning of the first ode of the first book, which points out the different inclinations and pursuits of men, alludes to a passage in *Pindar*, preserved by *Sextus Empiricus*, in the first *Pyrrh. Hypothes.*

Ἀλλοποδῶν μιν τίς εὐφραίνεισιν ἵππων τιμαὶ καὶ στεφανοί
τῆς δ' ἐν πολυχρυσοῖς θαλάμοις βιωτὰ
τρεπίαι δὲ τίς ἐπ' οἶμα ἄλιον καὶ θοάσων διαστηδῶν.

And line the 25th of the second * ode of the third book, is taken from a fragment of *Simonides* †, cited by *Aristides*. 2. *Platonica*.

* See P. Petiti. Misc. Obs. lib. iii. cap. 25.

† The words, Mors & fugacem persequitur virum, in Ode 2. book iii. are even translated from *Simonides*;

Ὁ δ' αὖ θάνατος ἐκίχεν καὶ τοῦ φυγομαχόν.

Eft & fideli tuta Silentio

Mercēs —————

— σιωπῆς ακινδυνόν γέρας.

BENTLEY, with his usual acuteness, conjectured, that an obscure passage in Horace would be illustrated, if ever the Greek epigram of Philodemus, to which he alluded, should be discovered.

* Gallis, hanc, Philodemus ait — L. i. sat. 2, 121.

Reiskius has since printed the very epigram, and the last words of it confirm Bentley's conjecture.

— τὴν δ' ἀρα Τάλλος ἔχον.

9. Nec quisquam noceat cupido mihi pacis ! at ille
Qui me commôrit (melius non tangere clamo)
Flebit, & insignis totâ cantabitur urbe †.

Peace is my dear delight—not Fleury's more :

But touch me, and no minister so sore.

* See Anthol. Græc. Lib. tres Oxonii, 1766, p. 93. Philodemus lived at Rome in the time of Tully, and is mentioned by him as a friend of Piso.

† V. 44.

VOL. II.

Z z

Whos'er

354 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Whoe'er offends, at some unlucky time,
Slides into verse, and hitches into rhyme †.

SUPERIOR to the original, on account of the lively and unexpected satire at the end of each of the two first lines; a high improvement of *Cupido mihi pacis*.

10. Corvius iratus leges minitatur & urnam;
Canidia Albuti, quibus est inimica, venenum;
Grande malum Turius, si quid se iudice certas—†

Slander or poison dread from Delia's rage,
Hard words, or hanging, if your judge be Page §.

It is difficult to say which passage is the more spirited. But what follows in Pope,

It's proper power to hurt each creature feels,
is inferior to

———— utque
Imperet hoc natura potens, sic collige mecum.
Dente lupus, cornu taurus petit; unde nisi intus
Monstratum? —||

† V. 75.

‡ V. 46.

§ V. 81.

|| V. 51.

I

But

But then again these two lines,

So drink with Walters, or with Chartres eat,
They'll never poison you, they'll only cheat *,

is expressed with an archness and a dryness
beyond the original, that follows :

—— Scævæ vivacem crede nepoti
Matrem ; nil faciet sceleris pia dextera (mirum ;
Ut neque calce lupus quemquam, nec dente petit bos)
Sed mala tollet anum vitiato melle cicuta †.

11. Ne longum faciam : seu me tranquilla senectus
Expectat, seu mors atris circumvolat alis ;
Dives, inops ; Romæ, seu fors ita jusserit exul ;
Quisquis erit vitæ scribam color ‡.

Then, learned Sir ! (to cut the matter short)
Whate'er my fate, or well or ill at court ;
Whether old age, with faint but chearful ray,
Attends to gild the ev'ning of my day,
Or death's black wing already be display'd,
To wrap me in the universal shade ;
Whether the darken'd rooms to muse invite,
Or whiten'd wall provoke the skewer to write ;
In durance, exile, Bedlam, or the mint,
Like Lee or Budgell, I will rhyme and print §.

* V. 89.

† V. 53.

‡ V. 54.

§ V. 91.

Z z 2

THE

356 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

THE brevity and force of the original is evaporated in this long and feeble paraphrase. The *third*, and *three* succeeding lines, are languid and verbose, and some of the worst he has written.

12. — Quid cum est Lucilius ausus

Primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem,
Detrahere & pellem, nitidas quâ quisque per ora
Cederet, introrsum turpis — — *

What? arm'd for virtue when I point the pen,
Brand the bold front of shameless guilty men,
Dash the proud gamester from his gilded car,
Bare the mean heart that lurks beneath a star;
Can there be wanting, to defend her cause,
Lights of the church or guardians of the laws †?

That strain † I heard was of a higher mood—

and of a tone more awful and majestic than the original pretends to assume. Our author's *Horace* differs as much from his original as does his *Homer*; yet *both* will be

* V. 64.

† V. 105.

‡ Milton's *Lycidas*, 87.

always

always read with great pleasure and applause.

13. Could pension'd *Boileau* lash, in honest strain,
Flatt'ers and *Bigots* ev'n in *Louis*' reign*?

BOILEAU acted with much caution and circumspection, when he first published his *Lutrin*, here alluded to; and endeavoured to cover and conceal his subject, by a preface intended to mislead his reader from the real scene of action; which preface is mentioned in the first volume of this essay, page 214; but it ought to be observed, that he afterwards, in the year 1683, threw aside this disguise; openly avowing the occasion that gave rise to the poem, the scene of which was not *Bourges* or *Pourges*, as before he had said, but *Paris* itself; the quarrel he celebrated being betwixt the Treasurer and the Chanter of the *Holy Chapel*, in that city. The canons were so far from being offended,

358 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

that they shewed their good sense and good temper by joining in the laugh. Upon which *Boileau* compliments them, and adds, that many of that society were persons of so much wit and learning, that he would as soon consult them upon his works, as the members of the French Academy †.

14. Quin ubi se a vulgo & scenâ in secreta remorant
Virtus Scipiadæ & mitis sapientia Læli,
Nugari cum illo, & discincti ludere, donec
Decoqueretur olus, soliti—— ‡

There, my retreat the best § companions grace;
Chiefs out of war, and statesmen out of place;
There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl
The feast of reason, and the flow of soul:
And he, whose lightning pierc'd th' Iberian lines,
Now forms my quincunx, and now ranks my vines;

† Oeuvres de M. Boileau, Despreaux, par M. de Saint Marc:
Tom. ii. 177, Paris, 1747.

‡ V. 71.

§ In the two preceding lines is a bad expression that ought to be noted——

—— the din the world can keep.

Or

Or tames the genius of the stubborn plain,
Almost as quickly as he conquer'd Spain *.

I KNOW not whether these lines, spirited and splendid as they are, give us more pleasure than the natural picture of the great *Scipio* and *Lælius*†, unbending themselves from their high occupations, and descending to common and even trifling sports: for the old commentator says, that they lived in such intimacy with *Lucilius*, “ ut quodem tempore *Lælio* circum lectos triclinii fugienti *Lucilius* superveniens, eum obtortâ mappâ quasi percussurus sequeretur.” For this is the fact to which Horace seems to allude, rather than to what *Tully* mentions in the second book *De Oratore*, of their amusing themselves in picking up shells and pebbles on the seashore. *Bolingbroke* is here represented as pouring out himself to his friend, in the

* V. 125.

† Whole character is finely touched by that sweet expression, *mitis sapientia*.

most *free* and *unreserved* conversations on topics the most interesting and important. But *Pope* was deceived; for it is asserted that the philosopher never discovered his *real principles* to our poet; who is said, strange as this appears, not even to have been acquainted with the *tenets* and *contents* of those very essays which were addrest to himself, at the beginning of Bolingbroke's Philosophical Works. And it is added, that *Pope* was surpris'd, in his last illness, when a common acquaintance informed him, that his Lordship, in a late conversation, had deny'd the *moral* attributes of God. There is a remarkable passage in a letter from Bolingbroke to Swift, dated June 1734:—"I am glad you approve of his *Moral Essays*. They will do more good than the sermons and writings of some, who had a mind to *find great fault* with them. And if the doctrines TAUGHT, HINTED AT, and IMPLIED in them, and the TRAINS of CONSEQUENCES DEDUCIBLE from these doctrines, were to be disputed in prose, I think
he

he would have no reason to apprehend, either the freethinkers on one hand, or the narrow dogmatists on the other. Some few things may be expressed a little *hardly*; but none are I believe unintelligible." With respect to the doctrines of the Essay on Man, I shall here insert an anecdote copied exactly from the papers of Mr. *Spence*, in the words of Pope himself. "In the moral poem, I had written an address to our Saviour, imitated from *Lucretius's* compliment to *Epicurus*; but omitted it, by the advice of *Dean Berkley*. One of our priests, who are more narrow than yours, made a less sensible objection to the epistle on happiness. He was very angry that there was nothing said in it of our eternal happiness hereafter; though my subject was expressly to treat only of the state of man here."

THERE are not, perhaps, four more finished lines in our author's works, than those above mentioned, relating to Lord Peterbo-

362 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

rough: particularly the very striking turn of compliment in the last line, which so beautifully and vigorously figures the rapidity of his conquest of Valencia,

15. ————— tamen me
Cum magnis vixisse invita fatebitur usque
Invidia ————— *

Envy must own, I live among the Great,
No pimp of pleasure, and no spy of state †.

POPE triumphs and felicitates himself upon having lived with the Great, without descending into one of those characters which he thinks it unavoidable to escape, in such a situation. From the generosity and openness of Horace's character, I think he might be pronounced equally free (at least from the *last*) of these imputations. There must have been something uncommonly captivating in the temper and manners of Horace, that could have made Augustus so fond of

* V. 75.

† V. 133.

him,

him, though he had been so avowed an enemy, and served under Brutus. I have seen some manuscript *Letters of Shaftesbury*, in which he has ranged in three different classes the *Ethical* writings of Horace, according to the different periods of his life in which he supposes them to have been written. The first, during the time he professed the Stoic philosophy, and was a friend of Brutus. The second, after he became dissolute and debauched, at the court of Augustus. The third, when he repented of this abandoned Epicurean life, wished to retire from the city and court, and become a private man and a philosopher.

16. ——— et fragili quærens illidere dentem,
Offendet solido——

POPE has omitted this elegant allusion. Horace seems to have been particularly fond of those exquisite morsels of wit and genius,

• V. 77.

3 A 2

the

364 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

the old *Æsopic* * fables. He frequently alludes to them, but always with a *brevity*, very different from our modern writers of fable; even the excellent *La Fontaine* has added a quaint and witty thought to this very fable. The *File* says to the Viper, Fab. 98,

Tû te romprois toutes les dents.
Je ne crains que *celles* du *Temps*.

17. Si mala condiderit in quem quis carmina, jus est
Judiciumque. H. esto si quis mala, sed bona si quis
Judice condiderit laudatus Cæfare——†

To laugh at the solemnity of Trebatius, Horace puts him off with a play upon words: But our important lawyer takes no notice of the jest, and finishes with a gravity suited to his character.

Solventur risû tabulæ, Tu missus abibis.

* See the learned Dissertation, DE BABRIO, lately published by Mr. Tyrwhit; in which are several of the greatest elegance. † V. 82.

THIS

THIS dialogue I heard lately spoken * with so much spirit and propriety, that if our author could have been present, he perhaps might have been inclined to alter an opinion, of which he seems very fond, in the fourth book of the *Dunciad*, “ that WORDS only are learnt at our GREAT SCHOOLS.”

18. Non meus hic *sermo* ; sed quæ præcepit *Ofellus*
Rusticus, abnormis sapiens, crassâque Minervâ †.

Hear *Bethel's* sermon, one not vers'd in schools,
But strong in sense, and wise without the rules †.

THIS discourse in praise of Temperance loses much of it's grace and propriety, by being put into the mouth of a person of a much higher rank in life than the honest countryman *Ofellus* ; whose patrimony had been seized by Augustus, and given to one of his soldiers named *Umbrenus* ; and whom, perhaps, Horace recommended to the emperor, by making him the chief speaker in

* At Eton School. † Sat. ii. lib. 2. v. 2. ‡ V. 10.

366 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

this very satire. We may imagine that a discourse on temperance from Horace, raised a laugh among the courtiers of Augustus; and we see, he could not venture to deliver it in his own person. This imitation of *Pope* is not equal to most of his others.

19. ————— Leporem sectatus, equove
Lassus ab indomito, vel, (si Romana fatigat
Militia assuetum græcari) seu pila velox,
Molliter austerum studio fallente laborem;
Sed te discus agit, pede cedentem æra disco;
Cum labor extuderit fastidia, siccus, inanis,
Sperne cibum vilem; nisi * Hymettia mella Falerno
Ne biberis diluta. Foris est promus & atrum.
Defendens pisces hiemat mare; cum sale panis
Latrantem stomachum bene leniet. Unde putas aut
Qui partum? non in caro nidore voluptas
Summa, sed in teipso est. Tu pulmentaria quære
Sudando. Pinguem vitæ albumque neque ostra
Nec scarus, aut poterit peregrina juvare lagois †.

* We are informed by Mr. Sturt, in his *Atticus*, that the honey of Hymettus, even to this time, continues to be in vogue, and that the seraglio of the Grand Seignor is served with a quantity of it yearly.

† V. g.

Go

Go hunt, work, exercise ! he thus began,
Then scorn a homely dinner if you can.
Your wine lock'd up, your butler stroll'd abroad,
Or fish deny'd (the river yet unthaw'd)
If then plain bread and milk will do the feat,
The pleasure lies in you, and not the meat †.

THIS paragraph is much inferior to the original; in which the mention of many particular *exercises* gives it a pleasing variety. The sixth and seventh lines in Horace are nervous and strong. - The third in Pope languid and wordy, which renders *foris est promus. Defendens, & latrantem, & caro, & pinguem, & album*, are all of them very expressive epithets. And the allusion to *Socrates's* constant exercise, *tu pulmentaria, &c.* ought not to have been omitted. - Pope's two last lines in this passage are very exceptionable.

20. Vix tamen eripiam, posito pavone, velis quin
Hoc potius quam gallinâ tergere palatum §.
Preach as I please, I doubt our curious men
Will chuse a pheasant still before a hen ||.

† V. 11.

§ V. 23.

|| V. 17.

HE

368 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

HE might have inserted the original word *peacocks*, as many of our English epicures are fond of them. Q. Hortensius had the honour of being the first Roman that introduced this bird to the table as a great dainty, in a magnificent feast which he made on his being created Augur. The price of a peacock, says Arbuthnot, page 129, was 50 denarii, that is, 1*l.* 12*s.* 3*d.* A flock of a hundred was sold at a much dearer rate, for 322*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* of our money. M. Aufidius Lurco, according to Varro, used to make every year of his peacocks 484*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

21. Unde datum sentis *Lupus* hic Tiberinus, an alto
Captus hiet? pontefne inter jactatus, an amnis
Ostia sub Tusci? laudas insane trilibrem
Mullum; in singula quem minuas pulmenta necesse
est*.

Of carps and mullets why prefer the great,
Tho' cut in pieces ere my Lord can eat;
Yet for small turbots such esteem profess?
Because God made these large, the other less †.

* V. 31.

† V. 31.

VERY inferior to the original; and principally so, because that pleasant stroke is omitted, of the eater's knowing in what part of the river the *Lupus** was taken, and whether or no betwixt the two bridges, which was deemed an essential circumstance. The reader will be well entertained on this subject, if he will look into the seventeenth chapter of the third book of Macrobius, particularly into a curious speech of *C. Titius*† there recited. But Horace seems to have had in his eye a passage of Lucilius, quoted

* Pliny, in his Natural History, b. ix. c. 34. mentions an extraordinary circumstance that gave value to their fish. Tot piscium saporibus, quibus pretia capientium periculo fiunt. The fish were esteemed, and supposed to have a higher flavour, in proportion to the dangers that had been undergone in the catching them. We are not yet arrived to the height to which Roman luxury was carried, however we may flatter ourselves on our improvements in eating.

† Cujus verba ideo pono, quia non solum de lupo inter duos pontes capto erunt testimonio, sed etiam mores, quibus plerique sunt vivebant, facile publicabunt. Describens enim homines prodigos in forum ad judicandum ebrios commeantes: quæque soleant inter se sermocinari, sic ait; "Ludunt aleæ, &c. P. 335. Parisiis, 1585.

370 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

by Macrobius : Sed & Lucilius acer & violentus poeta, ostendit scire se hunc piscem egregii saporis, qui inter duos pontes captus esset. Lucilii versus hi sunt ;

Fingere præterea afferri quod quisque volebat ;
Illum sumina ducebant atque Altilium Lanx,
Hunc pontes Tiberinos duo inter captus catillo.

WITH respect to the *mullus* (which is supposed to be what the French and we call *surmoulet*) Juvenal * speaks of one bought

* *Arbutnot* of Ancient Coins, p. 130. The expences of *Vitellius's* table for one year amounted to 7,265,625 pounds sterling. In Macrobius, lib. ii. c. 9. is a bill of fare, and an account of the company who supped with *Lentulus*, when he was made priest of *Mars*. And in *Suetonius*, (Life of *Vitellius*, cap. 13) is the description of a costly supper which his brother gave him, in which there were two thousand of the choicest birds; one dish, for its amplitude and capacity, was called *Minerva's* buckler, which consisted chiefly of the livers of *Stari*, the brains of pheasants and peacocks, the tongues of phanicoptere, and lampreys bellies, brought from the most distant coasts in *Triremis*. *Claudius Æsopus*, the tragedian, had one dish that cost him 600 sesteria, (4.843 l. 10s.) in which, to enhance the price of it, he had put singing-birds. *Vestris* is not yet rich enough to give such a dish to his admirers. I know not what *Æsopus's* salary was for acting; *Roscius* had thirty-two pounds five shillings a day.

for 48*l.* 8*s.* 9*d.* According to *Macrobius*, there was paid for another 56*l.* 10*s.* 1*d.* For a third, according to *Pliny*, 64*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.* Our age is as yet unacquainted with the niceness of the ancients in weighing their fishes *at table*, and beholding them *expire*. The death of a *mullus*, with the variety and change of colours in it's last moments, was reckon'd one of the most entertaining spectacles in the world, by the men of taste at Rome.

21. *Presentes Aufri, coquite horum obsonia*——•

Oh! blast it south winds! till a stench exhale,
Rank as the ripeness of a rabbit's tail †:

A VERY filthy and offensive image, for the happy and decent word *coquite*; it must be owned our author, as well as Swift, was but too fond of such disgusting images.

22. *Tutus erat Rhombus, tutoque Ciconia nido,
Donec vos autor docuit Prætorius*——†.

• V. 41.

† V. 37.

‡ V. 49.

B 2

The

372 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

The Robin-red-breast till of late had rest,
 And children sacred held a Martin's nest,
 'Till Beccafico's fold so dev'lish dear,
 To one that was, or would have been, a peer ||.

HE has happily substituted for the *flork* two sorts of birds that among us are held as it were sacred. *Asellus Sempronius Rufus* was the person * who first taught the Romans to eat *florks*, for which he was said to have lost the prætorship. On which subject the following verses were written, and have been preserved by the old commentator *Porphyrus*,

Ciconiarum Rufus iste Conditor *,
 Hic est duobus elegantior Plancis ;
 Suffragiorum puncta non tulit septem ;
 Ciconiarum populus ultus est mortem.

23. Porrectum magno magnum spectare catino
 Vellem, ait, Harpyiis Gula digna rapacibus †.

|| V. 37.

* See the Horace of *Badius Ascensius*, printed at Paris in folio, 1519, f. 213.

† V. 40.

Oldfield,

Oldfield, with more than Harpy throat endu'd,
Cries, fend me, Gods ! a whole hog barbecu'd * !

HE has happily introduced this large unwieldy instance of gluttony, supposed to be peculiar to the West Indies. But *Athenaus* † speaks of a cook that could dress a whole hog with various puddings in his belly. I unfortunately know not with what wine it was basted. The slow movement of the lines in the original, loaded with spondees, aptly represent the weight and vastness of the dish. *Gula* is used personally ; as it is also by *Juvenal*.

24. Si quis nunc mergos suaves edixerit assos,
Parebit pravi docilis Romana juventus ‡.

Let me extol a cat, on oysters fed,
I'll have a party at the Bedford-Head ;

* V. 25.

† An author that deserves to be more read and regarded, as abounding with entertaining anecdotes, and various accounts of the manners and ways of living of the ancients, and in quotations of elegant fragments of writers now lost. The same may be said of *Stobæus*, a work full of curious extracts upon important and pleasing subjects.

‡ V. 51.

Or

374 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Or ev'n to crack live craw-fish recommend,
‡ I'd never doubt at Court to have a friend §.

To dine upon a cat fattened with oysters,
and to crack live craw-fish, is infinitely more
pleasant and ridiculous than to eat *mergos*
affos. But then the words *extol*, and *recom-*
mend, fall far below *edixerit*; give out a *de-*
crete: So Virgil, Georgic the third, line 295,
does not advise but raises his subject by
saying,

Incipiens stabulis *edico* in mollibus herbam
Carpere oves ———

25. Ille repotia natales aliosque dierum
Festos albatu celebret ——— *

But on some lucky day (as when they found
A lost Bank-bill, or heard their son was drown'd †,

Much heightened and improved by two

‡ This fourth line is feeble and unmeaning.
§ V. 41. * V. 60. † V. 55.

such

such supposed occasions of the unnatural festivity and joy of a true miser.

26. Dulcia se in bilem vertent, stomachoque *tumultum*
Lenta feret pituita ——— †.

When bile, and phlegm, and wind, and acid jar,
And all the man is one intestine war §.

Τα γὰρ ἀνομοία στασιαζει, says *Hippocrates*:
the very metaphor here employed by *Horace*.
Two writers of science, in Greek, have used
a style eminently pure, precise, and elegant,
Hippocrates and *Euclid*.

27. ——— vides, ut pallidus omnis
Cæna defurgat dubiâ ——— *.

How pale each worshipful and rev'rend guest
Rise from a clergy or a city feast †.

Our author has been strangely guilty here
of false English and false grammar, by using
rise for *rises*. The expression in the original

‡ V. 75.

§ V. 71.

* V. 77.

† V. 76.

376 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

is from *Terence*; in the second act of the *Phormio*.

PH. Cæna dubia apponitur :

GETA. Quid istud verbi est? PH. ubi tu dubites quid sumas potissimum.

From which passage it is worth observing, that *Terence* was the first writer that used this expression.

28. ————— Hôs utinam inter
Heros natum tellus me prima tulisset *.

Why had I not in these good times my birth,
Ere coxcomb-pyes; or coxcombs, were on earth †.

THE last line, and the conceit of coxcomb-pyes and coxcombs, sink it below the original; which, by the way, says *Cruquius*, seems to allude to that of *Hesiod*, *Oper. & Dieb.*

Μήνεις* ἔγωγ' ἀφ' αὐλοῦ ἐγὼ πτερόϊσι μετῴει
Ἀδραστὶ —————

* V. 93.

† V. 97.

29. Dæ

29. Das aliquid Famæ, quæ carmine gratior aurem
Occupet humanam — †

Unworthy he, the voice of Fame to hear,
That sweetest music to an honest ear §.

Two very beautiful lines, that excel the original; though in truth the word *occupat* has much force. Horace again alludes to his favourite Grecians. Antisthenes philosopher, says the old commentator, cum vidisset adolescentem Acroamatibus multum delectari, O te, ait, infelicem, qui summum Acroama, hoc est, Laudem tuam non audivisti.

30. Cur * eget indignus quisquam te divite † ?
How *dar'st* thou let one worthy man be poor ?

VERY spirited, and superior to the original;
for *dar'st* is far beyond the mere *eget*.

† V. 94.

§ V. 99.

* " Ev'n modest want may bless your hand unseen,

" Tho' hush'd in patient wretchedness at home."

Which second line (of Dr. Armstrong) is exquisitely tender.

† V. 103.

|| V. 118.

378 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

31. Non aliquid patriæ tanto emetiris acervo *?

Or to thy country let that heap be lent,
As M———o's was—but not at five per cent †.

HE could not forbear this stroke against a nobleman, whom he had been for many years accustomed to hear abused by his most intimate friends. A certain parasite, who thought to please Lord Bolingbroke by ridiculing the avarice of the Duke of M. was stopt short by Lord Bolingbroke; who said, He was so very great a man, that I forget he had that vice.

32. Non ego, narrantem, temere edi luce professa
Quidquam, &c. ——— †

THIS speech of Ofellus continues in the original to the end of this satire. Pope has taken all that follows out of the mouth of *Bethell*, and speaks entirely in his own person. 'Tis impossible not to transcribe the pleasing picture of his way of life, and the

* V. 105.

† V. 131.

‡ V. 116.

account he gives of his own table, in lines that express common and familiar objects with dignity and elegance. See therefore his bill of fare, of which you will long to partake, and wish you could have dined at *Twickenham*.

32. 'Tis true, no turbots dignify my boards,
 But gudgeons, flounders, what my Thames affords :
 To Hounslow-Heath I point, and Bansted-Down,
 Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my
 own,
 From yon old walnut-tree a show'r shall fall,
 And grapes, long ling'ring on my only wall,
 And figs from standard and espalier join ;
 The dev'l is in you if you cannot dine.
 Then chearful healths (your mistress shall have
 place)
 And, what's more rare, a poet shall say * grace †.

33. Nam propriæ Telluris herum natura neque illum
 Nec me nec quemquam statuit — †

* Which Swift always did, with remarkable decency and devotion.

† V. 141.

‡ V. 130.

380 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

What's *property*? dear Swift! you see it alter,
From you to me, from me to Pêter Walter §.

SWIFT was always reading lectures of œconomy, upon which he valued himself, to his poetical friends. A shilling, says he, is a serious thing. His favourite maxim was,

“ Have money in your head, but not in your heart.”

Our author would have been pleased, if he could have known that his pleasant villa would, after his time, have been the property of a person of distinguished learning, taste, and virtue*.

34. ————— quocirca vivite fortes,
Fortiaque adversis opponite pectora rebus †.

Let lands and houses have what lords they will,
Let us be fix'd, and our own masters still †.

§ V. 167.

* The Right Honourable Welbore Ellis.

† V. 135.

‡ V. 179.

THE

THE majestic plainness of the original is weakened and impaired, by the addition of an antithesis, and a turn of wit, in the last line,

35. Primâ dicte mihi, summâ dicende Camænâ,
Spectatum fatis, & donatum jam rude quæris,
Mæcenas *; iterum antiquo me includere ludo.
Non eadem est ætas, non mens; Veianius armis

* It has been suspected that his affection to his friend was so strong, as to make him resolve not to outlive him; and that he actually put into execution his promise of *ibimus, ibimus*, *Od. xvii. l. 3.* Both died in the end of the year 746; U. C. *Horace* only three weeks after *Mæcenas*, November 27. Nothing can be so different as the plain and manly style of the former, in comparison with what *Quintilian* calls the *calamistros* of the latter, for which *Suetonius*, and *Macrobius*, c. 86, says *Augustus* frequently ridiculed him, though *Augustus* himself was guilty of the same fault. The learned *C. G. Heyne*, in his excellent edition of *Virgil*, after observing, that the well-known verses usually ascribed to *Augustus*, on *Virgil's* ordering his *Æneid* to be burnt, are the work of some bungling grammarian, and not of that Emperor; adds, "*Videas tamen Voltairium, horridos hos & ineptos versus non modo Augusto tribuere, verum etiam magnopere probare; ils sont beaux & semblent partir du cœur. Essai sur la Poësie Epique, c. 3.* Ita vides, ad verum pulchrarum sententiarum sensum & judicium, sermonis intelligentiam aliquam esse necessariam."

P. V. Maronis Opera, tom. i. p. 131. Lipsiæ, 1767.

Herculis

382 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Herculis ad postem fixis, latet abditus agro,
Ne populum extremâ toties exoret arenâ *.

St. John, whose love indulg'd my labours past,
Matures my present, and shall bound my last.
Why will you break the sabbath of my days?
Now sick alike of envy and of praise,
Public too long, ah let me hide my age!
See modest Cibber now has left the stage:
Our gen'als now, retir'd to their estates,
Hang their old trophies o'er the garden gates †.

THERE is more pleasantry and humour in Horace's comparing himself to an old gladiator, worn out in the service of the public, from which he had often begged his life, and has now at last been dismissed with the usual ceremonies, than for Pope to compare himself to an old actor or retired general. Pope was in his forty-ninth year, and Horace probably in his forty-seventh, when he wrote this epistle. Bentley has arranged

* Ep. i. lib. i. v. i.

† V. i. sp. i.

the writings * of Horace in the following order. He composed the first book of his Satires, between the twenty-sixth and twenty-eighth years of his age; the second book, from the years thirty-one to thirty-three; next, the Epodes, in his thirty-fourth and fifth year; next, the first book of his Odes, in three years, from his thirty-sixth to his thirty-eighth year; the second book in his fortieth and forty-first year; the third book, in the two next years; then, the first book of the Epistles, in his forty-sixth and seventh year; next to that, the fourth book of his Odes, in his forty-ninth to his fifty-first year. Lastly, the Art of Poetry, and second book of the Epistles, to which an exact date cannot be assigned.

36. Est mihi purgatam crebro qui perfonet aurem,
Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne
Peccet ad extremum ridendus & ilia ducat †.

* *J. Masson*, author of the Latin Life of Horace, does not agree to this arrangement of Horace's works; but does not seem to be able to substitute a more probable chronological order. See Hist. Crit. Repub. Lit. tom. v. p. 51.

† V. 7.

A voice

384 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

A voice there is that whispers in my ear *;
 ('Tis Reason's voice, which sometimes one can hear)
 Friend Pope, be prudent, let your muse take breath,
 And never gallop Pegasus to death,
 Lest stiff and stately, void of fire and force;
 You limp like Blackmore; or a Lord Mayor's horse †.

HORACE plainly alludes to the good genius of Socrates, which constantly warned him against approaching evils and inconveniences. POPE has happily turned it to Wisdom's voice, and as happily has added, "which *sometimes* one can hear." The *purged* ear is a term of philosophy. The idea of the jaded Pegasus, and the Lord Mayor's horse, are high improvements on the original. A Roman rea-

* He has excelled Boileau's imitation of these verses, ep. x. v. 44. And Boileau himself is excelled by an old poet, whom indeed he has frequently imitated, that is, *Le Franaise Vauquelin*, who was the father of N. V. des Yvetaux, the preceptor of Louis XIII. whose poems were published towards the end of his life, 1612. He says that he profited much by the satires of *Ariosto*. Boileau has borrowed much from him. He also wrote an Art of Poetry. One of his best pieces is an imitation of Horace's *Trebatius*, being a dialogue between himself and the Chancellor of France.

† V. 11.

der

der was pleased with the allusion to two well-known verses of Ennius * :

37. Virtutis veræ custos, rigidusque satelles †.

True as young LYTTELTON her cause pursue,
Still true to virtue, and as warm as true †.

A JUST, and not over-charged encomium, on an excellent man, who always served his friends with warmth (witness his kindness to Thomson) and his country with activity and zeal. His Poems, and Dialogues of the

* Sicut fortis equus spatio qui forte supremo
Vicit Olympia, nunc senio confectu quiescit.

Ennius, poeta antiquus (says Jul. Scaliger, with his usual bluntness) magnifico ingenio. Utinam hunc haberemus integrum, & amissemus, Lucanum, Statium, Silium Italicum, & tous ces garçons-la. The learned M. Monro, to whom we are indebted for so many additions to the *Menagiana*, reads with great acuteness, *Gastons-la*, by which term he thinks Scaliger points out the inflated, bombastic style of Lucan and Statius. How elegantly, and even poetically, does Quintilian give his judgment of Ennius; Hunc sicut sacros vetustate lucos adoremus, in quibus grandia & antiqua robora, jam non tantam habent speciem, quantam religionem. Lib. x. c. 1.

† V. 17.

† V. 29.

VOL. II,

3 D.

Dead,

386 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Dead, are written with elegance and ease; his Observations on the conversion of St. Paul, with clearness and closeness of reasoning; and his History of Henry II. with accuracy, and knowledge of those early times, and of the English constitution; and which was compiled from a laborious search into authentic documents, and the records lodged in the Tower and at the Rolls. A little before he died, he told me, that he had determined to throw out of the collection of all his works, which was then soon to be published, his first juvenile performance, the *Persian * Letters*, written, 1735, in imitation

* Montesquieu himself also says, that in this agreeable work there were some *juvenilia*, that he would wish to correct; "for though a Turk ought necessarily to see, think, and speak like a Turk, and not like a Christian, yet many persons do not attend to this circumstance, in reading my *Persian Letters*." See an entertaining collection of his Original Letters, p. 180. In this collection are some curious particulars relating to his great work, *The Spirit of Laws*. He tells his friend, the Count de Guasco, "Though many kings have not done me that honour, yet I know one who has read my work; and *M. de Maupertuis* has informed me, that this monarch is not always of my opinion. I have answered Maupertuis,

tation of those of his friend *Montesquieu*, whom he had known and admired in England; in which he said there were principles and remarks that he wished to retract and alter. I told him, that, notwithstand-

perthus, and told him, I would lay a wager, I could easily put my finger on those passages which the King dislikes." In page 166, he thus speaks of *Voltaire*; "Quant à Voltaire, il a trop d'esprit pour m'entendre; tous les livres qu'il lit, il les fait, après quoi il approuve ou critique ce qu'il a fait. And afterwards, speaking of Voltaire's dismissal from Berlin, "Voilà donc Voltaire qui paroît ne sçavoir ou reposer sa tête; ut eadem tellus quæ modo victori defuerat, deesset ad sepulturam. Le bon esprit vaut beaucoup mieux que le bel esprit." p. 198. It is much to be lamented, that the history of *Louis* the Eleventh, which *Montesquieu* had written, was burnt by a mistake of his secretary, p. 98. Mr. Stanley, for whom *Montesquieu* had a sincere esteem and regard, told me, that *Montesquieu* assured him, he had received more information from the commentaries of *Azo* on the Codex and Digest, a famous civilian of Bologna in the twelfth century, than from any other writer on the civil law. He is said to have had 10,000 scholars. Trithemius mentions him, c. 487. See *Arifii Cremonam Litteratam*. Tom. i. p. 89

I beg to add, that *Lyttelton* was not blind to the faults and blemishes of his friend *Montesquieu*. See notes on the History of the Life of Henry II. p. 291, 4to, where he is censured for an excessive desire of saying something new upon every subject, and differing from the common opinions of mankind.

388 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

ing his caution, the booksellers, as in fact they have done, would preserve and insert these letters. Another little piece, written also in his early youth, does him much honour; the *Observations on the Life of Tully*, in which, perhaps, a more dispassionate and impartial character of Tully is exhibited, than in the panegyrical volumes of Middleton.

38. Nunc in Ariftippi furtim præcepta relabor*.

Sometimes with Ariftippus, or St. Paul,
Indulge my candor, and grow all to all †.

THERE is an impropriety and indecorum, in joining the name of the most profligate parasite of the court of Dionysius with that of an apostle. In a few lines before, the name of *Montaigne* is not sufficiently contrasted by the name of *Locke*; the place required that two philosophers, holding very different tenets, should have been introduced. *Hobbes* might

* V. 19.

† V. 31.

have

have been opposed to *Hutcheson*. I know not why he omitted a strong sentiment that follows immediately,

Et mihi res, non me rebus subjungere conor*.

Which line Corneille took for his motto.

39. Non tamen idcirco contemnas lippus inungi †.

I'll do what MEAD and Cheselden advise ‡.

MEAD, a judge of pure Latinity, having disputed with Pope on the impropriety of the expression, *Amor publicus*, on Shakespear's monument, ended the controversy by giving up his opinion, and saying to him,

Omnia vincit amor & nos cedamus amori.

It may be amusing to the lovers of anecdotes, just to mention, that in a public inscription at Rheims in France, RACINE,

* V. 20.

† V. 29.

‡ V. 51.

who

396 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

who drew it up, used the words *Amor publicus*, in the very same sense. I believe both these great poets were wrong.

40. *Invidus, iracundus, iners, vinosus, amator* *.

Be furious, envious, slothful, mad, or drunk,
Slave to a wife, or vassal to a punk †.

I CANNOT forbear thinking but that Horace glanced at his † own frailties and imperfections, as he frequently does, in the four last epithets of this verse, in the original. As to *envy*, he had not a grain of it in his nature.

* V. 38.

† V. 61.

‡ As he does at his passion for building, in verse 100, below,

Diruit, edificat, mutat quadrata rotundis.

So also, Sat. iii. lib. ii. v. 308:

Accipe, primum
Edificas; hoc est longos imitaris, ab imo
Ad summum totus moduli bipedalis—

41. *Virtus*

41. *Virtus est vitium fugere* *.

'Tis the first virtue, vices to *abhor*,
And the first wisdom, to be fool no *more* †.

DR. KING informed me, that *these* were two of the rhymes to which Swift, who was scrupulously exact in this respect, used to object, as he did to some others in Pope.

42. *Per mare pauperiem fugiens, per saxa, per ignes ‡.*

Scar'd at the spectre of pale POVERTY §!

POPE has given life to the image, and added terror to the simple expression *pauperiem*.

43. *At pueri ludentes, Rex eris, aiunt,*

Si recte facies ——— ¶.

Yet ev'ry child another song will sing,

Virtue, brave boys! 'tis virtue makes a king **.

* V. 41. † V. 65. ‡ V. 46. § V. 70. ¶ V. 59.

** V. 91.

392 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

SOME commentators think Horace alluded to an old Greek play among children, called, βασιλινδα. But Lambinus observes, that the sport alluded to is mentioned in the *Theætetus* of Plato; where Socrâtes says, he that fails in his pursuit will be reckoned an ass, as the children say of him who cannot catch the ball; and he that catches it is called their king.

44. Ut propius spectes lacrymosa * poemata Pupi †!

For what? to have a box when eunuchs sing,
And foremost in the circle eye a king †.

OUR author is so perpetually expressing an affected contempt for kings, that it becomes almost a nauseous cant;

—the pride of kings—

—some monster of a king—

—pity kings—the gift of kings—

—Gods of kings—much above a king—

—Settle wrote of kings—

* The epithet *lacrymosa* is ironical. † V. 67. † V. 105.

HAWKINS BROWN laughed at him for this affectation, in the pleasant Imitations of English poets, on Tobacco.

Come, let me taste thee, *unexcis'd by kings!*

“ Since we cannot attain to greatness (says *Montagne*) let us have our revenge by railing at it.”

45. Olim quod vulpes ægroto cauta leoni
Respondit, referam : Quia me vestigia terrent,
Omnia te adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum*.

Faith, I shall give the answer Reynard gave :
I cannot like, dread Sir ! your royal cave ;
Because I see, by all the tracks about,
Full many a beast goes in, but none comes out †.

BOTH

* V. 73.

† V. 114.

† Conciseness was the quality, for which *Babrius*, if we may judge from the fragments, seems to have been so excellent. See *Dissertat. de Babrio*, Fab. 97, 50, 242 ; and above all, the exquisite fable of the Swallow and Nightingale, Fable 149 ; and the last in this learned and elegant dissertation. In the *Fabularum Æsopicarum Delicatus*, a book not sufficiently known, and now out of print, published at Oxford, 1698, are fifty fa-

VOL. II.

3 E

mis

394 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

BOTH poets have told the fable with an elegant brevity. Why did Pope omit *ægroto?* *Dread Sir*, and *Royal cave*, are good additions. Plato was also fond of this fable. He has put it into the mouth of Socrates, in the first Alcibiades. Ἀλλ' ατεχνως, κατὰ τὸν Αἰσώπειον μῦθον, οὐκ ἢ Ἀλωπὴξ πρὸς τὸν Λεόντα εἶπε, καὶ τὴν εἰς Λαιμεδαίμονα νομίσματος εἰσιόντος μὲν τὰ ἰχθυὶν τὰ ἐκείσε τετραμμένα δῆλα, ἐξίοντος δὲ, ὕδαμι ἀντὶς ἰδοί *.

bles exquisitely written, versibus senariis, by *Ant. Alsop*. The best life of *Æsop* is by M. *Mezeriac*, the learned editor of *Diophantus*: a book so scarce, that *Bentley* complained he could never get a sight of it; and *Bayle* had never seen it, when he first published his Dictionary. It was reprinted in the *Memoires de Litterature* of M. de Sallengre, 1717, tom. i. p. 87. This was the author, whom Malherbe asked, when he shewed him the edition of *Diophantus*; “if it would lessen the price of bread?”

* Tom. ii. p. 122. Serrani. Ed. H. Steph. 1578. Pope has connected the passage that immediately follows in a forced and quaint manner, which Horace never thought of;

Well, if a king's a *lion*, at the least

The people are a many-headed beast. V. 120.

as if the word *bellua* had any relation to the *lion* before-mentioned.

46. Excipiantque

46. Excipiantque senes quos in vivaria mittant †.

Some with fat bucks on childish dotards fawn †.

THE legacy-hunters, the *Hæredipetæ*, were a more common character among the ancients than with us. The ridicule, therefore, is not now so striking. Lucian has five pleasant Dialogues on the subject, from page 343 to 363, in the 4to. edition of Hemsterhusius. Horace himself appears to have failed more in exposing this folly, than in any other of his satires; and principally so, by mixing ancient with modern manners, and making Tiresias instruct Ulysses in petty frauds, and artifices too subtle for the old prophet and hero to dictate and to practise. Sat. 5. lib. 2.

47. Multis occulto crescit res fœnore *, —

is far excelled in force and spirit by,

While with the silent growth of ten per cent,
In dirt and darkness, hundreds sink content \$.

† V. 79.

‡ V. 130.

• V. 80.

§ V. 132.

3 E 2

48. Nullus

396 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

48. Nullus in orbe finis Baiis præluet amœnis,
Si dixit dives; lacus & mare sentit amorem
Festinantis heri *. —

Sir Job † sail'd forth, the evening bright and still,
" No place on earth, he cry'd, like Greenwich-hill !"
Up starts a palace ; lo, th' obedient base
Slopes at its foot, the woods its sides embrace,
The silver Thames reflects its marble face ‡. }

SUPERIOR to the original : a pleasing little landscape is added to the satire. But *Greenwich-hill* is not an exact parallel for *Baia* ; where the Romans of the best taste and fashion built their villas. POPE's is the villa of a citizen. The absurd and aukward magnificence of opulent citizens has, of late, been frequently exposed ; but no where with more humour than in the *Connoisseur*, and in the characters of *Sterling* and *Mrs. Heidelberg*, in the *Clandestine Marriage*.

* V. 83.

† More lively than the general word, *show*.

‡ V. 138.

— Cui

—Cui si vitiosa * libido

Fecerit auspicium ; cras ferramenta Teanum
Tolletis, fabri———†

Now let some whimsy, or that dev'l within,
Which guides all those who know not what they }
mean,
But give the knight (or give his lady) spleen ;
Away, away ! take all your scaffolds down,
For snug's the word ;—my dear, we'll live in town ‡.

HORACE says, he will carry his buildings from so proper and pleasant a situation as *Baia*, to *Teanum* ; a situation unhealthy and unpleasant. POPE says, he will not build at all, he will again retire to town. He has, I think, destroyed the connexion by this alteration. Mutability of temper is indeed equally exhibited in both instances, but Horace keeps closer to his subject.

* Scaliger observes, that Horace is fond of adjectives that end in *osus*,

† V. 85.

‡ V. 143.

49. Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo?
 Quid pauper? ride; mutat cœnacula, lectos,
 Balnea, tonfores; conducto navigio æque,
 Nauseat ac locuples quem ducit priva triremis*.

Did ever Proteus, Merlin, any witch,
 Transform themselves so strangely as the rich.
 Well, but the poor—the poor have the same itch.
 They change their weekly barber, weekly news,
 Prefer a new japanner to their shoes;
 Discharge their garrets, move their beds, and run,
 (They know not whither) in a chaise and one;
 They hire their sculler, and, when once aboard,
 Grow sick, and damn the climate—like a lord †.

THIS imitation is in truth admirable.
 It is, perhaps, one of his finest passages. All
 the parallels are fortunate, and exactly hit
 the original; and the images drawn from
 modern life are minutely applicable to the
 purpose.

50. Si curtatus inæquali tonsore capillos,
 Occurro; rides: si forte subucula pexæ
 Trita subest tunicæ, vel si toga diffidet inpar;
 Rides——— ‡.

* V. 99.

† V. 152.

‡ V. 94.

You laugh, half beau, half sloven if I stand,
My wig all powder, and all snuff my band;
You laugh, if coat and breeches strangely vary,
White gloves, and linen worthy Lady Mary*!

I AM inclined to think that Horace laughs at himself (not at Virgil, as has been supposed) for the ungraceful appearance he sometimes made, and the incongruity of his dress. Perhaps our *little, round, fat, oily* man, was somewhat of a sloven. Poor POPE was so weak and infirm, and his body required so many wrappers and coverings, that it was hardly possible for him to be neat. No poet, except *Malherbe*, ever wore so many † pair of stockings. *Tomson* speaks elegantly of his person, in that delightful poem, *The Castle of Indolence*, stanza the 33d.

* V. 161.

† Ten in number, according to his friend RAGAN, in the account of his life.

400 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

He came, the bard, a little Druid-wight,
Of wither'd aspect; but his eye was keen,
With sweetness mix'd. In russet brown bedight,
As is his sister of the copses green,
He crept along, unpromising of mien.
Gross he who judges so. —

51. Nil admirari, prope res est una, Numici,
Solaque quæ possit facere & servare beatum *.

“ Not to admire, is all the art I know,

“ To make men happy, and to keep them so.”

Plain truth, dear MURRAY †, needs no flowers of
speech,

So take it in the very words of CREECH ‡ :

Who, in truth, is a much better || translator
than he is usually supposed and allowed to
be.

* Epist. vi.

† He knew the exact taste and learning of the person he
addresses, and has laboured this imitation accordingly.

‡ V. 1.

|| Mr. Christopher Pitt has imitated the 7th sat. of Hor.
b. ii. ; the 19th epistle, b. ii. ; the 4th epistle, b. i. ; the 10th
epistle, b. i. ; the 18th epistle b. i. (see his poems, vol. xliii.
of the English poets) with a freedom and a facility of versifi-
cation truly Horatian. Perhaps it may deserve consideration,
whether the best manner of imitating these satires and epistles,
which approach so near to comedy, and to common conversa-
tion,

be. He is a nervous and vigorous writer : and many parts; not only of his *Lucretius*, but of his *Theocritus* and *Horace* (though now decried) have not been excelled by other translators. One of his pieces may be pronounced excellent ; his translation of the thirteenth satire of *Juvenal* ; equal to any that *Dryden* has given us of that author.

52. Hunc solem & stellas & decedentia certis
Tempora momentis, sunt qui formidine nulla
Imbuti spectent——*.

This vault of air, this congregated ball,
Self-center'd sun and stars, that rise and fall :
There are, my friend, whose philosophic eyes
Look through, and trust the Ruler with his skies †.

THIS last line is quaint and obscure ; the two first vigorously expressed. *Horace*

tion, would not be to adopt the *familiar* blank verse, which *Mr. Colman* has so successfully employed in his *Terence* ; a sort of verse no more resembling that of *Milton*, than the *Hexameters* of *Homer* resemble those of *Theocritus*.

* V. 3. † V. 5.

VOL. II.

3 F

thought

402 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

thought of a noble passage * in Lucretius,
book v. line 1185.

In cœloque, Deum sedes, & templa locârunt,
Per cœlum volvi quia sol, & luna videntur :
Luna, dies, & nox, & noctis signa serena,
Noctivagæque faces cœli, flammæque volantes,
Nubila, ros, imbres, nox, venti, fulmina, grando,
Et rapidi fremitus, & murræura magna minarum.

53. Ludicra quid, plausus, & amici dona Quiritis †.

Or popularity? or stars and strings?
The mob's applauses, or the gifts of kings †.

CONSIDERING the present state of politics, the abilities of politicians in this country, and the number of those who think themselves completely qualified to guide the state, might I be pardoned for the pedantry of recommending to them the few following

* To those who know the number of *thoughts that breathe, and words that burn*, in this animated writer, it is surprising that Tully could speak of him in so cold and tasteless a manner; Lucretii poemata non sunt lita multis luminibus Ingenii, multæ tamen *Artis*. Ep. ad Fratrem, Lib. ii. Ep. 11.

† V. 7.

† V. 13.

words

words of Socrates; who thus addresses Alcibiades: Γυμνασαι πρωτον, ω μακαριε και μαθε
 ὃ δει μαθοντα ιεναι επι τα της πολεως, προτερον
 δε μη. Alcibiad. 2d. p. 133. Serr. Platon.
 T. 2.

54.

—Cum bene notum

Porticus Agrippæ, & via te confexerit Appi;
 Ire tamen restat, Numa quo devenit & Ancus*.

Grac'd as thou art with all the pow'r of words,
 So known, so honour'd, at the House of Lords;
 Conspicuous scene!—another yet is nigh,
 (More silent far!) where kings and poets lie;
 Where MURRAY, long enough his country's pride,
 Shall be no more than TULLY, or than HYDE†.

MUCH beyond the original; particularly
 on account of the very happy and artful use
 POPE has made of the neighbourhood of
 the House of Parliament to Westminster Ab-
 bey; and of the well-turned and unexpected
 compliment he has paid to his illustrious
 friend. The character of Lord Chancellor

* V. 25.

† V. 48.

404 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

CLARENDON seems to grow every day brighter, the more it is scrutinized, and his integrity and abilities are more ascertained and acknowledged, even from the publication of private papers, never intended to see the light.

55. — vis rectè vivere? quis non?
Si virtus hoc una potest dare, fortis omittis
Hoc age deliciis — *

Would ye be blest? despise low joys, low gains;
Disdain whatever CORNBURY disdains;
Be virtuous, and be happy for your pains †.

THIS again is superior to the original; where quis non, is feeble and flat: and the mention of a particular shining character gives a force and spirit to the line. This amiable young nobleman wrote, from Paris, 1752, a very pressing remonstrance to Mr. Mallet, to dissuade him, but in vain, from publishing a very offensive † digression on the

* V. 29.

† V. 60.

‡ It appears that Swift suspected the irreligious principles of Bolingbroke, so early as the year 1724; for he makes for himself

the Old Testament, in Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on History. "I must say to you, Sir, for the world's sake, and for his sake, that part of the work ought by no means to be communicated further. If this digression be made public, it will be censured, it must be censured, it ought to be censured. It will be criticised too by able pens, whose erudition, as well as their reasonings, will not easily be answered." He concludes by

himself the following apology to the Dean:—"I must on this occasion set you right, as to an opinion, which I should be very sorry to have you entertain concerning me. The term *esprit fort*, in English free-thinker, is, according to my observation, usually applied to them, whom I look upon to be the *pests* of society; because their endeavours are directed to loosen the bands of it, and to take at least one curb out of the mouth of that wild beast man, when it would be well if he was checked by half a score others." One of these *pests*, however, he chose to become, by strictly enjoining Mr. Mallet to publish the writings he left against religion. See Letters of Swift by Hawkesworth. vol. ii. p. 200. In this collection is the very entertaining journal which Swift wrote daily to Mrs. Johnson, containing a minute account, and many private anecdotes of the ministry of Queen Anne. Perhaps the inside of a court (*vitæ postscenia*) was never so clearly displayed. But yet Swift does not seem to have known all the intrigues then carried on.

406 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

saying, " I therefore recommend to you to suppress that part of the work, as a good citizen of the world, for the world's peace, as one intrusted and obliged by Lord Bolingbroke, not to raise new storms to his memory."

56. — Virtutem verba putas, ut
Lucum ligna? — *

But art thou one, whom new opinions sway,
One who believes as TINDAL leads the way;
Who *Virtue* and a *Church* alike disowns,
Thinks *that* but words, and *this* but brick and stones†?

HERE we have a direct and decisive censure of a celebrated infidel writer; at this time, therefore, which was 1737, POPE was strongly and openly on the side of religion, as he knew the great lawyer to be to whom he was writing. Horace, it is said, alludes to the words of a dying Hercules in a Greek tragedy; and Dion Cassius relates, in the 27th book of his history, that these were

* V. 31.

† V. 62.

the words which Brutus used just before he stabbed himself, after his defeat at Philippi. But it is observable, that this fact rests solely on the credit of this fawning and fulsome court-historian; and that Plutarch, who treats largely of Brutus, is silent on the subject. If Brutus had adopted this passage, I cannot bring myself to believe, that Horace would so far have forgotten his old principles, as to have mentioned the words adopted by the dying patriot, with a mark of reproach and reprobation.

57. Scilicet uxorem cum dote, fidemque & amicos,
Et genus & formam * regina PECUNIA donat,
Ac bene nummatum decorat SUADELA, VENUSQUE†.

For mark th' advantage; just so many score
Will gain a wife with half as many more;
Procure her beauty, make that beauty chaste,
And then such friends as cannot fail to last.

* The Duke of M. dining with Prince Eugene, in a very large company, spoke in high terms of *his* Queen Anne; the Prince whispered to the oldest and most venerable general officer now living, *Regina Pecunia* "that's his Queen."

† V. 38.

A man

408 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

A man of wealth is dubb'd a man of worth,
Venus shall give him form, and Anstis birth*.

Not imitated with the vigour and energy of the original. The first line is weak and languid. Three *Divinities*, for such he makes them, PECUNIA, SUADELA, and VENUS, conspire in giving their accomplishments to this favourite of fortune. Modern images could not be found to answer these *profopopœias*.

58. — Chlamydes Lucullus, ut aiunt,
Si posset centum scenæ præbere rogatus †,

* V. 77.

† Orationis subtilitas imitabilis illa quidem videtur esse existimanti, sed nihil experiēti minus. *Cicero*. See what Demetrius Phalereus says, in a passage full of taste and judgment, *περί τῆς ὁμιλίας χάριτος*, pag. 113. Oxon. 1676.

These lines of Horace are a strong example of this species of style,

——parentis viribus atque
Extenuantis eas consulto——

This treatise of Demetrius Phalereus is not so much read, but perhaps is more useful than even Dionysius de Struſs. Some have imagined that Dionysius was the author of it. There are many internal proofs why it could not be written so early as *D. Phalereus*,

“ Qui

“ Qui possum ? tot ait : tamen & quærem & quot
habebo,

“ Mittam”—post paulo scribit sibi millia quinque
Esse domi chlamydam ; partem vel tolleret omnes *.

His wealth brave Timon gloriously confounds ;
Ask'd for a groat, he gives a hundred pounds ;
Or, if three ladies like a luckless play,
Takes the whole house upon the poet's day †.

By no means equal to the original : there is so much pleasantry in alluding to the known story of the Prætor coming to borrow dresses (paludamenta) for a chorus in a public spectacle that he intended to exhibit, who asked him to lend him a hundred, says Plutarch ; but Lucullus bade him take *two hundred*. Horace humorously has made it *five thousand*. We know nothing of Timon, or the three ladies here mentioned. There is still another beauty in Horace ; he has suddenly, according to his manner, introduced Lucullus speaking ; “ *qui possum, &c.*”

* V. 49.

† V. 85.

410 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

He is for ever introducing these little inter-locutions, which give his satires and epistles an air so lively and dramatic.

59. Mercemur seryum, qui dicet nomina, lævum
Qui fodiat latus, & cogat trans * pondera dextram
Porrigere : hic multum in *Fabiâ* valet, ille *Velinâ* ;
Cui libet is fasces dabit ; eripietque curule,
Cui volet, importunus ebur : Frater, Pater, adde ;
Ut cuique est ætas ita quemque facetus adopta †.

Then hire a slave, or, if you will, a lord,
To do the honours, or to give the word ;
Tell at your levee, as the crowds approach,
To whom to nod, whom take into your coach,
Whom honour with your hand : to make remarks,
Who rules in Cornwall, or who rules in Berks ;

* Various are the opinions about the meaning of *trans pondera* ; some commentators think it means, across the carriages and waggons loaded with beams and stones, &c. or the weight of the gown pulled up. But *Gesner's* interpretation seems the most sensible ; ultra æquilibrium corporis, cum periculo cadendi ; the candidate bows so low that he almost oversets his body. Fodit latus lævum candidati nomenclator ; alacris nimium & cupidus candidatus ita protendit dextram, ut æquilibrium pœne perdat. And *Ovid* uses *pondera* in this sense ; Ponderibus librata suis. *Met.* i. 13.

† V. 50.

“ This

" This may be troublesome, is near the chair :

" That makes three members; this can chuse a
may'r."

Instructed thus, you bow, embrace, protest,

Adopt him son, or cousin; at the least,

Then turn about, and laugh at your own jest*.

AN admirable picture of septennial folly and meanness during an *election canvass*, in which the arts of English solicitation are happily applied to Roman. Some strokes of this kind, though mixed with unequal trash, in the *Pasquin* of Fielding, may be mentioned as capital, and full of the truest humour. It is indeed a fine and fruitful subject for a satyrist. As POPE could not use a *nomenclator* (*servum*) he has happily added — a *Lord*. And if he has omitted a lively circumstance, *sodiat latus*, he has made ample compensation by, *take into your coach*. *Importunus* is admirably turned by, *this may be troublesome*; as is *facetis*, by, *laugh at your own jest*.

* V. 110.

60. ——— remigium vitiosum Ithacensis Ulyssæi
Cui potior patriâ fuit interdicta voluptas*,

is admirably applied to the frequent mischievous effects of *early* foreign travel.

From Latian Syrens, French Circæan feasts,
Return well travell'd, and transform'd to beasts;
Or for a titled punk, or foreign flame,
Renounce our country, and degrade our name †?

61. Si, Mimnermus uti censet, sine amore jocisque,
Nil est jucundum, vivas in amore jocisque ‡.
If SWIFT cry wisely, “ *Vive la Bagatelle §!*”

THE Dean made his old age despicable, by mis-spending it in *trifling* and in *railing*; in scribbling paltry riddles and rebusses, and venting his spleen in peevish invectives. His banishment to Ireland, for such he thought it, and his disappointed ambition, embittered and exasperated his mind and temper. An excellent man, and excellent

* V. 63. † V. 123. ‡ V. 65. § V. 129.

philosopher,

philosopher, whose loss I shall long and sincerely deplore, has lately made the following strictures upon one of his capital works.

“ *Misanthropy* is so dangerous a thing, and goes so far in sapping the very foundation of *morality* and *religion*, that I esteem the last part of *Swift's Gulliver* (that I mean relative to his Houyhnhnms and Yahoos) to be a worse book to peruse, than those which we forbid, as the most flagitious and obscene. One absurdity in this author (a wretched philosopher, though a great wit) is well worth remarking: in order to render the nature of *men odious*, and the nature of *beasts amiable*, he is compelled to give *human* characters to his *beasts*, and *beastly* characters to his *men*; so that we are to admire the *beasts*, not for being *beasts*, but *amiable men*; and to *detest* the *men*, not for being *men*, but detestable beasts.

WHOEVER has been reading this *unnatural* FILTH, let him turn for a moment to a
Spectator

414 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Spectator of ADDISON, and observe the PHILANTHROPY of that classical writer; I may add, the superior purity of his *diction*, and his *wit**."

62. Cum tot sustineas & tanta negotia solus,
Res Italas armis tuteris, moribus ornes,
Legibus emendes, in publica commoda peccem,
Si longo sermone morer tua tempora, Cæsar †!

While you, great patron of mankind, sustain
The balanc'd world, and open all the main;
Your country, chief, in arms abroad defend,
At home with morals, arts, and laws amend;
How shall the man from such a monarch steal
An hour, and not defraud the public weal †?

ALL those nauseous § and outrageous compliments, which Horace, in a strain of abject adulation, degraded himself by paying
to

* *Philological Inquiries*, in three parts, by JAMES HARRIS, Esq; London, 1781. Part iii. page 537.

† Ep. i. Lib. ii. v. 1. † V. 1.

§ Horace, says Pope, in the advertisement to this piece, made his court to this great prince by writing with a decent freedom-towards him, with a just contempt of his low flatter-

to Augustus, POPE has converted into bitter and pointed sarcasms, conveyed under the form of the most artful irony. Of this irony the following specimens shall be placed together, in one view, added to the preceding lines, which are of the same cast.

Wonder of kings ! like whom, to mortal eyes,
None e'er has risen, and none e'er shall rise *.
How shall we fill a library with wit,
When Merlin's cave is half unfinish'd yet †?
My liege ! why writers little claim your thought,
I guess ; and with their leave will tell the fault ‡.
Yet think, great Sir ! so many virtues shown,
Ah, think what poet best may make them known !
Or chuse at least some minister of grace,
Fit to bestow the Laureat's weighty place ¶.

ers, and with a manly regard to his own character." Surely he forgot,

Jurandasque tibi per *Numen* ponimus *aras*,
Nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes, &c.

We sometimes speak incorrectly of what are called the writers of the *Augustan* age. Terence, Lucretius, Catullus, Tully, J. Cæsar, and Sallust, wrote *before* the time of Augustus ; and Livy, Virgil, Horace, Tibullus, and Propertius, were not made good writers by his patronage and encouragement.

* V. 29. † V. 354. ‡ V. 356. ¶ V. 376.

Oh

416 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Oh could I mount on the Mæonian wing,
 Your arms, your actions, your *repose*, to sing !
 What seas you travers'd, and what fields you fought,
 Your country's peace, how oft, how dearly bought !
 How barbarous rage subfided at your word,
 And nations wonder'd while they dropp'd the sword !
 How when you nodded, o'er the land and deep,
 Peace stole her wing, and wrapt the world in sleep ;
 Till earth's extremes your mediation own,
 And Asia's tyrants tremble at your throne.
 But verse, alas ! your majesty disdains,
 And I'm not us'd to panegyric strains :
 Besides, a fate attends on all I write,
 That when I aim at praise, they say I bite *.

IT may be observed, in general, that the imitations of these *two* epistles of the *second* book of Horace, are finished with so much accuracy and care, and abound in so many applications and allusions most nicely and luckily adapted to the original passages, that a minute comparison would be useless. In a very few instances, however, he may be thought to fall short of his model. This appears in

* V. 394.

the account of the rise of poetry among the Romans, v. 139—because he could not possibly find a parallel for the sacrifices paid to *Tellus*, and *Silvanus*, and the *Genius*, nor to the licentiousness of the Fescennine verses, which were restrained by a law of the Twelve Tables.

POPE has also failed in ascribing that introduction of our polite literature to *France*, which Horace attributes to Greece among the *Romans*, (v. 156. orig.) It was to Italy, among the moderns, that we owed our true taste in poetry. *Spencer* and *Milton* imitated the Italians, and not the French. And if he had correctness in his view, let us remember, that in point of *regularity* and *correctness*, the French * had no dramatic piece equal to the *Silent Woman* of Ben *Johnson*, performed 1609. At which time *Corneille* was but three years old. The rules of

* The very first French play, in which the rules were observed, was the *Sophonisba* of *Mairet*, 1633.

418 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

the *drama* are as much violated in the * *Cid*, 1637, beautiful as it is, as in the *Macbeth*, *Lear*, and *Othello*, all written before *Corneille* was born; whose first comedy, *Melite*, which is now never acted, was represented 1625. The pieces of the very fertile *Hardy* (for he wrote six hundred) the immediate predecessor of *Corneille*, are full of improbabilities, indecorums, and absurdities, and by no means comparable to *Melite*. As to the *correctness* of

* Father *Tournemine* used to relate, that M. de *Chalons*, who had been secretary to *Mary de Medicis*, and had retired to Rouen, was the person who advised *Corneille* to study the Spanish language; and read to him some passages of *Guillin de Castro*, which struck *Corneille* so much, that he determined to imitate his *Cid*. The artifices used by *Richlieu*, and the engines he set to work to crush this fine play, are well known. Not one of the Cardinal's tools was so vehement as the *Abbe d'Aubignac*; who attacked *Corneille* on account of his family, his person, his gesture, his voice, and even the conduct of his domestic affairs. When the *Cid* first appeared (says *Fontenelle*) the Cardinal was as much alarmed as if he had seen the Spaniards at the gates of Paris. In the year 1635, *Richlieu*, in the midst of the important political concerns that occupied his mighty genius, wrote the greatest part of a play, called, *La comedie des Tuilleries*, in which *Corneille* proposed some alterations to be made in the third act: which honest freedom the Cardinal never forgave.

the

the French stage, of which we hear so much, the rules of the three unities are indeed rigorously and scrupulously observed * ; but the best of their tragedies, even *some* of those of the sweet and exact *Racine*, have defects of another kind, and are what may be justly called, *descriptive* and *declamatory* dramas; and contain the sentiments and feelings of the *author* or the *spectator*, rather than of the *person* introduced as speaking. “ After the restoration, says POPE in the margin, Waller, with the Earl of Dorset, Mr. Godolphin, and others, translated the Pompey of Corneille; and the more correct French poets began to be in reputation.” But the model was unfortunately and injudiciously chosen; for the Pompey of Corneille is one of his most declamatory † tragedies. And the rhyme translation they gave of it, is performed

* As they are certainly in *Samson Agonistes*.

† See the Essay on Shakespeare by Mrs. Montague, in which she has done honour to her sex and nation; and which

420 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

formed pitifully enough. Even Voltaire confesses, that Corneille is always making his heroes say of themselves, that they are great men. It is in this passage that POPE says of two great masters of versification ;

Waller was smooth ; but *Dryden* taught to join
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine *.

WHAT ! did Milton contribute nothing to the harmony and extent of our language ? nothing to our national taste, by his noble imitations of Homer, Virgil, and the Greek tragedies ? Surely his *verses vary*, and *resound* as much, and display as much *majesty* and

was sent to Voltaire with this motto prefixed to it ; by a person who admired it as a piece of exquisite criticism :

—PALLAS Te hoc Vulnere, PALLAS
Immolat ————— VIRG.

The *Iphigenie* of Racine, it must be owned, is an incomparable piece ; it is chiefly so, from Racine's attentive study of Euripides. Corneille had not read the Greek tragedies. He was able to read Aristotle's *Poetics* only in Heinsius's translation. It is remarkable, that there is not a single line in *Otway* or *Rowe* from the Greek tragedies. And *Dryden* in his *Œdipus* has imitated Seneca and Corneille, not Sophocles.

* V. 267.

energy, as any that can be found in *Dryden*. And we will venture to say, that he that studies *Milton* attentively, will gain a truer taste for genuine poetry, than he that forms himself on French writers. His name surely was not to be omitted on this occasion.

THE other passages in which POPE appears not to be equal to his original, are, in the three little stories which Horace has introduced into his second epistle, with so much nature and humour; namely, the story of the slave-seller, at verse 2; that of the soldier of Lucullus, at verse 26; and the story of the madman at Argos, verse 128. The last, particularly, loses much of its grace and propriety, by transferring the scene from the theatre to the parliament-house, from poetry to politics.

63. Two noblemen of taste and learning, the Duke of Shrewsbury and the Earl of Oxford, desired POPE to melt down and cast
anew

422 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

anew the weighty bullion of Dr. Donne's satires; who had degraded and deformed a vast fund of sterling wit and strong sense, by the most harsh and uncouth diction. POPE succeeded in giving harmony to a writer, more rough and rugged than even any of his age, and who profited so little by the example *Spencer* had set, of a most musical and mellifluous versification; far beyond that of *Fairfax*, who is so frequently mentioned as the greatest improver of the harmony of our language. The satires of *Hall*, written in very smooth and pleasing numbers, preceded those of *Donne* many years; for his *Virgide-miarum* were published, in six books, in the year 1597; in which he calls himself the very first English satirist. This, however, was not true in fact; for Sir Thomas Wyatt, of Allington Castle in Kent, the friend and favourite of *Henry VIII.* and, as was suggested, of *Ann Boleyn*, was our first writer of satire worth notice. But it was not in his numbers only that *Donne* was reprehensible. He abounds in
false

false thoughts, in far-sought sentiments, in forced unnatural conceits. He was the corrupter of *Cowley*. *Dryden* was the first who called him a *metaphysical* poet. He had a considerable share of * learning; and, though he entered late into orders, yet was esteemed a good divine. *James I.* was so earnest to prefer him in the church, that he even refused the Earl of Somerset, his favourite, the request he earnestly made, of giving Donne an office in the council. In the entertaining account of that conversation which *Ben Johnson* is said to have held with Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden in Scotland, in the

* He was one of our poets who wrote elegantly in Latin; as did *Ben Johnson*, (who translated into that language great part of Bacon de Augmentis Scient.) *Cowley*, *Milton*, *Addison*, and *Gray*. In Donne's introduction to his witty catalogue of curious books, written plainly in imitation of *Rabelais*, (whom also *Swift* imitated, in a catalogue of odd treatises, prefixed to the Tale of a Tub) there is a passage so minutely applicable to the present times, that I am tempted to transcribe it. *Ævum fortiti sumus, quo planè indoctis nihil turpius, plenè doctis nihil rarius. Tam omnes in literis aliquid sciunt, tam nemo omnia. Mediâ igitur plerumque itur viâ, & ad evitandam ignorantia turpitudinem, & legendi fastidium.*

year

424 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

year 1619, containing his judgments of the English poets, he speaks thus of Donne, who was his intimate friend, and had frequently address him in various poems.

“ HE told Mr. Drummond, that Donne was originally a poet; his grandfather on the mother's side was Heywood the epigrammatist: that Donne, for not being understood, would perish. He esteemed him the first poet in the world for some things; his verses of the lost Othadine he had by heart, and that passage of the calm, that dust and feathers did not stir, all was so quiet. He affirmed, that Donne wrote all his best pieces before he was twenty-five years of age. The conceit of Donne's transformation, or metempsychosis, was, that he sought the soul of that apple which Eve pulled, and hereafter made it the soul of a bitch, then of a she-wolf, and so of a woman; his general purpose was to have brought it into all the bodies of the heretics, from the soul of Cain, and

and at last left it in the body of Calvin. He only wrote one sheet of this, and since he was made doctor repented earnestly, and resolved to destroy all his poems. He told Donne, that his Anniversary was prophane, and full of blasphemies; that if it had been written on the Virgin Mary, it had been tolerable: to which Donne answered, that he described the idea of a woman, and not as she was *."

64. THE two Dialogues, entitled One thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight, which are the last pieces that belong to this section, were more frequently transcribed, and received more alterations and corrections, than almost any of the foregoing poems. By long habit of writing, and almost constantly in one sort of measure, he had now arrived at a

* And again in his *Discoveries*:—"As it is fit to read the best authors to youth first, so let them be of the openest and the clearest. As Livy before Sallust, and Sydney before Donne."

happy and elegant familiarity of style, without flatness. The satire in these pieces is of the strongest kind; sometimes, direct and declamatory, at others, ironical and oblique. It must be owned to be carried to excess. Our country is represented as totally ruined, and overwhelmed with dissipation, depravity, and corruption. Yet this very country, so emasculated and debased by every species of folly and wickedness, in about twenty years afterwards, carried its triumphs over all its enemies, through all the quarters* of the world, and astonished the most distant nations with a display of uncommon efforts, abilities, and virtues. So vain and groundless are the prognostications of poets, as well as politicians. It is to be lamented, that no genius could be found to write an *One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-one*, as a counterpart to these two satires. Several

* We cannot ascribe these successes, as M. de Voltaire does, to the effects of *Brown's Estimate*. See Additions à l'Hist. Generale, p. 409.

passages deserve particular notice and applause. The design of the Friend, introduced in these dialogues, is to dissuade our poet from *personal* invectives. He desires him to copy the sly, insinuating style of Horace; and dextrously turns the very advice he is giving into the bitterest satire.

Horace would say, Sir Billy *serv'd the Crown*,
Blunt could *do business*, H—ggins *knew the town*:
In Sappho touch the *failings* of the sex,
In rev'rend bishops note some *small neglects*;
And own the Spaniard did a *waggish* thing,
Who cropt our ears and sent them to the king*.

THE character of Sir Robert Walpole was dictated by candour and gratitude.

Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
Of social pleasure, ill-exchang'd for pow'r;
Seen him, uncumber'd with the venal tribe,
Smile without art, and win without a bribe†.

THIS character, together with that drawn of the same minister by Hume, in his fourth

* V. 13.

† V. 28.

428 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

essay, will perhaps contribute to give a dispassionate posterity a more amiable character of him than we usually allow him, and counter-work the *Dissertation* on Parties. Nothing can be more animated and lively, than where our author, seeming to follow the cautious admonitions of his friend, replies,

Come, harmless characters, that no one hit,
Come, Henley's oratory, Osborn's wit,
The honey dropping from Favonio's tongue,
The flow'rs of Bubo, and the flow of Young !
The gracious dew of pulpit eloquence,
And all the well-whipt cream of courtly sense * !

To which must be added a stroke that cuts
to the quick ;

Or teach the melancholy muse to mourn,
Hang the sad verse on Carolina's urn ;
And hail her passage to the realms of rest,
All *parts* perform'd, and *all* her children blest †.

I RECOLLECT no passage in Horace, Juvenal, or Boileau, more strongly pointed, or

* V. 65.

† V. 79.

more

more well-turned, than where our poet insists
that the *dignity* of *vice* must not be lost.

Ye gods ! shall Cibber's son, without rebuke,
Swear like a lord, or Rich out-whore a duke ?
A fav'rite's porter with his master vie,
Be brib'd as often, and as often lie ?
Shall Ward draw contracts with a statesman's skill,
Or Japhet pocket, like his Grace, a will ?
Is it for Bond, or Peter, (paltry things !)
To pay their debts, or keep their faith like kings ?
This, this, my friend, I cannot, must not bear,
Vice thus abus'd demands a nation's care *.

THE noble description of the triumph of
VICE, one of the most picturesque in all his
works, must not be here omitted.

Lo ! at the wheels of her triumphal car,
Old England's Genius, rough with many a scar,
Dragg'd in the dust ; his arms hang idly round,
His flag inverted trails along the ground !
Our youth, all liv'ry'd o'er with foreign gold,
Before her dance ; behind her, crawl the old !
See thronging millions to the pagod run,
And offer country, parent, wife, or son !

430 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Hear her black trumpet through the land proclaim,
That Not To Be Corrupted is the shame*.

SWIFT tells him, in a letter dated August 8, 1738, that he takes his second dialogue to equal any thing he had ever writ. The same Friend is here again introduced making such remonstrances as before. And several parts of the dialogue are more rapid, and approach nearer to conversation than any lines he had ever before written :

P. The pois'ning dame.—F. You mean.—P. I don't.

F. You do.

P. See now I keep the secret, and not you.

The bribing statesman.—F. Hold—too high you go—

P. The brib'd elector.—F. There you stoop too low.

P. I fain would please, if I but knew with what ;

Tell me what knave is lawful game, or not.

Suppose I censure—you know what I mean ;

To save a † bishop, may I name a dean ?

F. A dean,

* V. 150.

† Some of the reverend bench, and particularly one of a truly-exalted character, are injuriously treated in line 70.

Ev'n in a bishop, I can spy desert ;

Secker is decent————

The

F. A dean, Sir?—No—his fortune is not made;
You hurt a man that's rising in the trade*.

WEARIED with the severity and poignancy of most of the preceding passages, we look with delight on the pleasing enumeration of his illustrious and valuable friends:

Oft, in the clear, still mirrour of retreat,
I study'd *Shrewsbury*, the wise and great:
Carleton's calm sense, and *Stanhope's* noble flame,
Compar'd, and knew their gen'rous end the same.
How pleasing *Atterbury's* softer hour!
How shin'd the soul, unconquer'd in the Tow'r!
How can † I *Pult'ney*, *Chesterfield*, forget,
While Roman spirit charms, and Attic wit;

Argyle,

The exemplary life, and extensive learning, of this great prelate are sufficient and ample confutations of the *invidious episthet* here used; which those, who are acquainted with his Lectures and Sermons, in which are found a rare mixture of simplicity and energy, read with indignation.

* V. 35.

† That *Pulteney* had a more manly understanding than *Chesterfield*; will not be doubted: but I verily believe he had also more true wit. The two lines on *Argyle* are said to have been added, on the duke's declaring in the House of Lords, on occasion of some of Pope's satires, that if any man dared to use his name in an invective, he would run him through
the

Argyle, the state's whole thunder born to wield,
 And shade alike the senate and the field;
 Or *Wyndham*, just to freedom and the throne,
 The master of our passions, and his own * ?.

AMONG these, *Atterbury* was his chief intimate. The turbulent and imperious temper of this haughty prelate was long felt and remembered in the college over which he presided. It was with difficulty Queen Anne was persuaded to make him a bishop; which she did at last, on the repeated importunities of Lord Harcourt, who pressed the queen to do it, because she had before disappointed him, in not placing Sacheverell on the bench. After her decease, *Atterbury* vehemently urged his friends to proclaim the Pretender; and on their refusal, upbraided them for their timidity with many oaths; for he was accustomed to swear, on any strong

the body, and throw himself on the mercy of his peers, who, he trusted, would weigh the provocation. *Bolingbroke's* Letter to *Wyndham*, is one of the most curious of his works, and gave a deadly and incurable blow to the folly and madness of Jacobitism.

* V. 78.

provocation.

provocation. In a collection of letters lately published by Mr. Duncombe, it is affirmed, on the authority of *Elijab Fenton*, that Atterbury, speaking of POPE, said, there was

Mens curva in Corpore curvo.

This sentiment seems utterly inconsistent with the warm friendship supposed to subsist between these two celebrated men. But Dr. Herring, in the 2d vol. of this collection, p. 104, says; “If Atterbury was not worse used, than any honest man in the world ever was, there were strong contradictions between his public and private character.” There is an anecdote, so uncommon and remarkable, lately mentioned in Dr. *Maty's* Memoirs of the Earl of Chesterfield, and which he gives in the very words of that celebrated nobleman, that I cannot forbear repeating it in this place:—“I went, said Lord Chesterfield, to Mr. POPE, one morning at Twickenham, and found a large folio bible, with gilt clasps, lying before

434 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

him upon his table; and, as I knew his way of thinking upon that book, I asked him, jokingly, if he was going to write an answer to it? It is a present, said he, or rather a legacy, from my old friend the Bishop of Rochester. I went to take my leave of him yesterday in the Tower, where I saw this bible upon his table. After the first compliments, the Bishop said to me, My friend POPE, considering your infirmities, and my age and exile, it is not likely that we should ever meet again; and therefore I give you this legacy to remember me by it.—Does your lordship abide by it yourself?—I do.—If you do, my lord, it is but lately. May I beg to know what new light or arguments have prevailed with you now, to entertain an opinion so contrary to that which you entertained of that book all the former part of your life?—The Bishop replied, We have not time to talk of these things; but take home the book; I will abide by it, and I recommend you to do so too, and so God
bless

blefs you!"—Charity and justice call on us, not hastily to credit so marvellous a tale, without the strongest testimony for its truth. In one of those entertaining letters, which the Bishop wrote about the year 1727, to a Mr. Thiriot* a French gentleman, we find a striking remark on the Bishop of Meaux. "There is a serious warmth in all he says, and his manner of saying it is noble and moving; and yet I question, after all, whether he *sometimes is in good earnest.*" *Atterbury* was, on the whole, rather a man of ability than a genius. He writes more with elegance and correctness, than with any force of thinking or reasoning. His letters to POPE are too much crowded with very trite

* In one of these letters he speaks thus of Sir *Isaac Newton*:—The very lively and piercing eye that Mr. Fontenelle, in his famous eulogium, gives him, did not belong to him, at least not for twenty years past, about which time I first became acquainted with him. Indeed, in the whole air of his face and make, there was nothing of that penetrating sagacity which appears in his works. He had something rather languid in his look and manner, which did not raise any great expectation in those who did not know him.

436. ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

quotations from the classics. It is said, he either translated, or intended to translate, the *Georgics* of Virgil, and to write the life of Cardinal Wolsey, whom he much resembled. Dr. Warburton had a mean opinion of his critical abilities, and of his discourse on the *Iæpis of Virgil*. He was thought to be the author of the life of Waller, prefixed to the first octavo edition of that poet's works.

THERE is a happy imitation of *Perfius*, and of *Boileau*, at verse 128.

——— Come then, I'll comply ;
Spirit of *Arnall* ! aid me while I lie !
Cobbam's a coward, *Polwarth* is a slave,
And *Lyttelton* a dark designing knave ;
St. John has ever been a wealthy fool ;
But let me add, Sir *Robert*'s mighty dull.

This is the passage of *Perfius*, Sat. i.
v. 110.

——— Per me equidem sint omnia protinus alba,
Nil moror; Euge, omnes, omnes, bene miræ eritis res;
Hoc juyat ?——

And

And thus *Boileau*, Sat. ix. v. 287.

Puisque vous le voulez, je vais changer de file,
Je le declare donc, Quinault est un Virgile.
Pradon comme un soleil en nos ans a paru.
Pelletier ecrit mieux qu'Ablancourt ni Patru:
Cotin, à ses sermons trainant toute la terre,
Fend les flots d'Auditeurs pour aller à sa chaire.

BUT POPE has plainly the superiority, by the artful and ironical compliments to his friends.

THE beastly simile, at line 171, may safely be pronounced, however difficult it may be in many cases to trace resemblances, to be taken from a passage in the *Remains of Butler*, the incomparable author of *Hudibras*:

Let courtly wits to wits afford supply,
As hog to hog in state of *Westphaly*;
If one, through nation's bounty, or his lord's,
Has what the frugal dirty soil affords,
From him the next receives it, thick or thin,
As pure a mess almost as it came in;
The blessed benefit, not there confin'd,
Drops to the third, who nuzzles close behind;

From

438 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

From tail to mouth they feed, and they carouse;
The last full fairly gives it to the *House*.

THE passage in *Butler* runs thus:—"Our modern authors write plays, as they feed hogs in *Westphalia*; where but one eats pease or acorns, and all the rest feed upon his, and one another's *excrements*." Thoughts on Various Subjects, p. 497. v. 2.—Though those Remains were not published in the lifetime of POPE, yet Mr. *Tbyer* informs us, that Mr. *Longueville*, in whose custody they were, communicated them to *Atterbury*, from whom POPE might hear of them. 'Tis impossible any two writers could casually hit upon an image so very peculiar and uncommon.

I CONCLUDE this section by observing, that these Dialogues exhibit many marks of our author's petulance, party-spirit, and self-importance, and of assuming to himself the character of a general censor; who, alas! if he had possessed a thousand times more genius

nus and ability than he actually enjoyed, could not alter or amend the manners of a rich and commercial, and, consequently, of a luxurious and dissipated nation,



S E C T. XIII.

O F T H E D U N C I A D .

WHEN the first complete and correct edition of the *Dunciad* was published in quarto, 1729, it consisted of three books; and had for its hero *Tibbald*, a cold, plodding, and tasteless writer and critic, who, with great propriety, was chosen, on the death of *Settle*, by the Goddess of Dulness, to be the chief instrument of that great work which was the subject of the poem; namely,

440 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

namely, “ the introduction (as our author expresses it) of the lowest diversions of the rabble of *Smithfield*, to be the entertainment of the court and town; the *action* of the *Dunciad* being, the removal of the imperial seat of Dulness from the city to the polite world; as that of the *Æneid* is the removal of the empire of *Troy to Latium*.” This was the primary subject of the piece. Our author adds, “ as *Homer*, singing only the wrath of Achilles, yet includes in his poem the whole history of the Trojan war; in like manner our poet hath drawn into this *single action* the whole history of Dulness and her children. To this end, she is represented, at the very opening of the poem, taking a view of her forces, which are distinguished into these three kinds, party-writers, dull poets, and wild critics. A *person* must be fixed upon to support *this action*, who (to agree with the *design*,) must be such an one as is capable of being all three. This *phantom* in the poet’s mind, must have a *name*. He
seeks

seeks for one who hath been concerned in the *journals*, written bad *plays* or *poems*, and published low *criticisms*. He finds his name to be *Tibbald**, and he becomes of course the hero of the poem."

THIS design is carried on, in the *first* book, by a description of the Goddess fixing

* Who was a kind of *Margites*. It is a singular fact in the history of literature, that the same mighty genius, who by his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* became the founder of Tragedy, should also, by his *Margites*, as Aristotle observes in the second chapter of his Poetics, become the father of Comedy. This piece was written in various sorts of metre, and particularly hexameter and iambic. Only three verses remain of this piece, which was much celebrated by the ancients; one in the second *Alcibiades* of Plato;

Ὡς αἰεὶ πολλὰ μὲν ἔργα, κακῶς δ' ἠπιστάτο πάντα.

Another in the sixth book of *Aristotle's Ethics*;

Τοὺ δ' εἰ' αἰ' σκαπίηρα θεοὶ θεσαν, ὅτ' ἀεοῦνται.

A third is cited by the scholiast of *Aristophanes*, in the *Birds*.

Μυσσῶν θεισάπων, καὶ ἐκηβολῆς Ἀπολλωνος.

The poem is mentioned by *Polybius*, *Dion Chrysostom*, *Plutarch*, *Lucian*, *Stobæus*, and others.

her eye on Tibbald; who, on the evening of a lord-mayor's day, is represented as fitting pensively in his study, and apprehending the period of her empire, from the old-age of the present monarch *Settle*; and also by an account of a sacrifice he makes of his unsuccessful works; of the Goddess's revealing herself to him, announcing the death of *Settle* that night, anointing and proclaiming him successor. It is carried on in the *second* book, by a description of the various games instituted in honour of the new king, in which *booksellers*, *poets*, and *critics* contend. This design is, lastly, completed in the *third* book, by the Goddess's transporting the new king to her temple, laying him in a deep slumber on her lap, and conveying him in a vision to the banks of *Lethe*, where he meets with the ghost of his predecessor *Settle*; who, in a speech that begins at line 35, to almost the end of the book, shews him the past triumphs of the empire of Dulness, then the present, and lastly the future: enumerating particularly by what aids, and by what persons,

persons, *Great Britain* shall be forthwith brought to her empire, and prophesying how first the nation shall be over-run with farces, operas, shows; and the throne of Dulness advanced over both the theatres: then, how her sons shall preside in the seats of arts and sciences; till, in conclusion, all shall return to their original chaos. On hearing which,

Enough! enough! the raptur'd MONARCH cries;
And through the ivory gate the vision flies.

with which words, the design above recited, being perfected, the poem concludes. Thus far all was clear, consistent, and of a piece; and was delivered in such nervous and spirited versification, that the delighted reader had only to lament that so many poetical beauties were thrown away on such dirty and despicable subjects, as were the scribblers here proscribed; who appear like monsters preserved in the most costly *sprits*. But in the year 1742, our poet was

444 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

persuaded, unhappily enough, to add a *fourth* book to his *finished* piece, of such a very different cast and colour, as to render it at last one of the most motley compositions, that perhaps is any where to be found, in the works of so exact a writer as POPE. For one great purpose of this *fourth* book, (where, by the way, the hero does nothing at all) was to satirize and proscribe infidels, and free-thinkers, to leave the ludicrous for the serious, Grub-street for theology, the mock-heroic for metaphysics; which occasioned a marvellous mixture and jumble of images and sentiments, Pantomime and Philosophy, Journals and Moral evidence, Fleet-ditch and the High Priori road, *Curl* and *Clarke*.—To ridicule our fashionable libertines, and affected minute philosophers, was doubtless a most laudable intention; but speaking of the Dunciad as a work of art, in a critical not a religious light, we must venture to affirm, that the subject of this fourth book was foreign and heterogeneous,

and the addition of it as injudicious, ill-placed, and incongruous, as any of those dissimilar images we meet with in *Pulci* or *Ariosto*. It is like introducing a crucifix into one of *Teniers's* burlesque conversation-pieces. Some of his most splendid and striking lines are indeed here to be found; but we must beg leave to insist that they want *propriety* and *decorum*, and must wish they had adorned some *separate* work, against irreligion, which would have been worthy the pen of our bitter and immortal satirist.

BUT neither was this the only alteration the Dunciad was destined to undergo. For in the year 1743, our author, enraged with *Gibber*, (whom he had usually treated with contempt ever since the affair of *Three Hours after Marriage*) for publishing a ridiculous pamphlet against him, dethroned *Tibbald*, and made the Laureate the hero of his poem. *Gibber*, with a great stock of levity, vanity, and affectation, had sense, and wit, and humour.

446 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

mour. And the author of the *Careless Husband*, was by no means a proper king of the dunces. "His treatise on the Stage, says Mr. Walpole, is inimitable: where an author writes on his own profession, feels it profoundly, and is sensible his readers do not, he is not only excusable but meritorious, for illuminating the subject by new metaphors, or bolder figures than ordinary. He is the *coxcomb* that sneers, not he that instructs by appropriated diction." The consequence of this alteration was, that many lines, which exactly suited the heavy character of *Tibbald*, lost all their grace and propriety when applied * to *Cibber*. Such as,

Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound !

Such also is the description of his gothic library; for *Cibber* troubled not himself

* 'Tis dangerous to disoblige a great poet or painter. *Dante* placed his master *Brunetto* in his *Inferno*. And *Michael Angelo* placed the Pope's master of the ceremonies, *Biaggio* in hell, in his Last Judgment.

with

with *Caxton*, *Wynkyn*, and *De Lyra*. *Tibbald*, who was an antiquarian, had collected these curious old writers. And to slumber in the Goddeſs's lap was adapted to *his ſtupidity*, not to the *vivacity* of his ſucceſſor.

If we now deſcend, from theſe remarks on the general *deſign* and conſtitution of the *Dunciad*, to particular paſſages, the following muſt be mentioned, as highly finiſhed, and worked up with peculiar elegance and force. In book i. the Chaos of Abſurd Writings, v. 55, to v. 78. In book ii. v. 35, the Phantom of a Poet, to v. 50. The Deſcription of the Tapeſtry, v. 143, to v. 156. The Adventures of Smedley, and what he ſaw in the ſhades below, v. 331, to v. 350. The Effects of hearing two dull Authors read, v. 387, to the end of that book. In book iii. the Gholt of *Settle*, v. 35, to v. 66. View of Learning, v. 83, to v. 102. The Deſcription of Pantomimes, Farces, and their monſtrous Abſurdities, v. 235, to v. 264.

In

448 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

In book iv. v. 1, to v. 16. The Modern Traveller, v. 295, to v. 330. The Florist, v. 403, to v. 420. The Butterfly-hunter, v. 421, to v. 436. The Effects of the Yawn, from v. 627, to the end. The frequent * parodies introduced on Homer, Virgil, Milton, and other great poets, than which nothing has a stronger effect in hero-comic poems, are made with singular pleasantry, happiness, and judgment.

BUT just criticism calls on us also to point out some of those passages that appear ex-

* Many of the ancients were fond of parodies. It is well known how many *Aristophanes* has given us on *Euripides* and other tragedians. *Athenæus*, in the 9th book of his *Deipnos*, p. 406, informs us, that *Chamæleon* of Pontus said, that *Hegemon* was the first author very famous for parodies. He was called, *φῶν* (*Lenticula*.) He was also an excellent actor, and the Athenians were so fond of him, that one day, when news was brought of their defeat in Sicily, they would not quit the theatre, but insisted that *Hegemon* should finish the piece. He was a great favourite of *Alcibiades*; of whom, and *Hegemon*, *Athenæus* relates a story worth the reader's perusal, p. 407. edit. *Casaubon*. Lugduni, 1612. There are some excellent parodies in the *Rehearsal*, in *Bramston's Art of Politics*, in the *Scribleriad*, and the works of *Fielding*.

ceptionable

ceptionable in the Dunciad. Such, in book i. v. 163, is the hero's first speech; in which, contrary to all decorum and probability, he addresses the Goddess Dulness, without disguising her, as a despicable being; and even calls himself Fool and Blockhead;

Me emptiness and dulness could inspire,
And were my elasticity and fire.——
Did on the stage my fops appear confin'd?
My life gave ampler lessons to mankind.——
What then remains? Ourselves still, still remain,
Cibberian forehead, and Cibberian brain.——

For a person to be introduced, speaking thus of himself, is in truth outrageously unnatural and out of character.

At v. 300, in this book, also, is a stroke of profaneness that cannot pass unblamed:

Lift up your gates, ye princes, see him come!
Sound found, ye viols; be the catcall dumb!

So also, book iii. v. 126. (and book iv. v. 562.)

Dove-like, she gathers to her wings again.

450 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

And in the arguments he talks of giving
a Pisgab-fight of the future *fulness* of *her*
glory, and of sending priests and *comforters*.
 In book ii. the filthiness of the images,
 v. 93, and v. 160, is extremely offensive and
 disgusting. In book iii. the ridicule on the
 useful and curious publications of *Hearne*,
 was very undeserved. In book iv. the Ge-
 nius of the schools is made to declare, v. 148,
 that,

Words are man's province, words we teach alone;
 Confine the thought, to exercise the breath,
 And keep them in the pale of words till death.

Surely our author, when he passed this
 censure, was ill-informed of what was taught
 and expected in our great schools; namely,
 besides reading, interpreting, and translating
 the best writers of the best ages, to be able
 to compose Essays, Declamations, and Verses,
 in *Greek*, in *Latin*, and in *English*; and in
 some, to write critical remarks on Homer,
 Sophocles, Demosthenes, *Aristotle's Poetics*,

OF

or *Longinus*; an exercise not of the memory, but judgment. And as to *plying* the *memory*, and *loading* the *brain* (see verse 157) it was the opinion of Milton, and is a practice in our great schools, “that if passages from the heroic poems, orations, and tragedies of the ancients were solemnly pronounced, with right accent and grace, as might be taught, (*and is*) they would endue the scholars even with the spirit and vigour of *Demosthenes* or *Cicero*, *Euripides* or *Sophocles*.” The illustrious names of *Wyndham*, *Talbot*, *Murray*, and *Pulteney*, which our author himself immediately adds, and which catalogue might be much enlarged, with the names of many great statesmen, lawyers, and divines, are a strong confutation of this opprobrious opinion. In book iv. v. 210. is just such another breach of truth and decorum as was remarked above, in making *Aristarchus* (*Bentley*) abuse *himself*, and laugh at *his own* labours :

Thy mighty scholiast, whose unweary'd pains
Made Horace dull, and humbled Maro's strains.

452 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Turn what they will to verse, their toil is vain,
 Critics like *Me*, shall make it prose again.
 For attic phrase in Plato let them seek,
 I poach in Suidas for unlicens'd Greek.—
 For thee we dim the eyes, and stuff the head,
 With all such reading, as was never read;
 For thee explain a thing till all men doubt it,
 And write about it, Goddess! and about it.

LASTLY, in this 4th book, the sudden appearance of Annius, v. 347, of Mummius, 371, and of a gloomy clerk, v. 459, make this part of the poem obscure, as we know not who these personages are, nor whence they came. After all, the chief fault of the *Dunciad* is the * violence and vehemence of its

* Which sour the temper of the reader; insomuch that I know a person, whose name would be an ornament to these papers, if I was suffered to insert it, who, after reading a book of the *Dunciad*, always *sooths* himself, as he calls it, by turning to a canto in the *Fairy Queen*. This is not the case in that very delightful and beautiful poem, *Mac Flecknoe*, from which Pope has borrowed so many hints, and images, and ideas. But Dryden's poem was the offspring of *contempt*, and Pope's of *indignation*: one is full of *mirth*, and the other of *malignity*. A vein of pleasantry is uniformly preserved through the whole of *Mac Flecknoe*, and the piece begins and ends in the

its satire, and the excessive height to which it is carried; and which therefore I have heard compared to that marvellous column of boiling water, near mount *Hecla*, thrown upwards, above ninety feet, by the force of a subterraneous fire *.

same key. It is natural and obvious to borrow a metaphor from music, when we are speaking of a poem whose verification is particularly and exquisitely sweet and harmonious. The numbers of the Dunciad, by being much laboured, and encumbered with epithets, have something in them of stiffness and harshness. Since the total decay of learning was foretold in the Dunciad, how many very excellent pieces of *Criticism, Poetry, History, Philosophy, and Divinity*, have appeared in this country, and to what a degree of perfection has almost every art, either useful or elegant, been carried!

* It is in a valley in Iceland, about sixty miles from the sea; it is called the fountain of *Geiser*. Sir Joseph Banks, our great philosophical traveller, had the satisfaction of seeing this wonderful phenomenon.

S E C T. XIV. AND LAST.

Of some IMITATIONS of HORACE,
the MISCELLANIES, EPITAPHS, and
PROSE WORKS.

THE seventh epistle of the first book of Horace, and the sixth satire of the second, are here imitated in a style and manner different from the former imitations, in the burlesque and colloquial style and measure of Swift*; in which our author

* The following is written in the first leaf of a copy of Stevens's Herodotus, now in the library of Winchester college, in Swift's own hand-writing, and is a literary curiosity, being a specimen of his Latin. — "*Judicium de Herodoto post longum tempus relecto. Ctesias mendacissimus Herodotum mendaciorum arguit, exceptis paucissimis, (ut me fert*

thor has not succeeded, but falls back, as was natural, from the familiar, into a more high and pompous manner; as in the following lines, v. 125, *Perditur hæc inter, &c.*

Thus in a sea of folly tost,
My choicest hours of life are lost;
Yet always wishing to retreat,
Oh, could I see my country seat!

And again at line 189; in the fable of the Mice;

fert sententia) omni modo excusandum. Cæterum diverticulis abundans hic pater historicorum, filum narrationis ad tædium abruptit. Unde oritur (ut par est) legentibus confusio, et exinde oblivio. Quin et forsân ipsæ narrationes circumstantiis nimium pro re scatent. Quod ad cætera, hunc scriptorem inter apprimè laudandos censeo, neque Græcis neque barbaris plus æquo faventem aut iniquum; in orationibus fere brevem, simplicem, nec nimis frequentem. Neque absunt dogmata e quibus eruditus lector prudentiam tam moralem quam civilem haurire poterit."—— Swift, in his discourse on the *Contests*, &c. appears to be well acquainted with *Thucydides*, *Polybius*, and *Dionys. Halicar.* and to have had a considerable knowledge of ancient history. Of all our poets, perhaps *Akenside* was the best Greek scholar since *Milton*.

456 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Tell how the moon-beam trembling falls,
And tips with silver all the walls ;
Palladian walls, Venetian doors,
Grottesco roofs, and stucco floors.

The difference of styles is more perceivable, from the circumstance of their being immediately subjoined to the lighter and less ornamental verses of Swift.

THE first ode of the fourth book of Horace, is an elegant compliment to Mr. *Murray*, now *Lord Mansfield*. And it may be worth observing, that the measure POPE has chosen, is precisely the same that *Ben Johnson* used in a translation of this very ode, in which are some lines smoother than our old bard's usual strains ; p. 268,

Then twice a day, in sacred lays,
The youths and tender maids shall sing thy praise ;
And in the Salian manner meet
Thrice round thy altar with their ivory feet.

I cannot

I cannot forbear adding, that there is much harmony and ease of versification in Ben Johnson's ten *lyric pieces* addressed to *Charis*, in page 165 of his works.

THE second stanza of the imitation of part of the ninth ode of Horace, book iv, is well expressed;

Tho' daring Milton fits sublime;
In Spencer native Muses play;
Nor yet shall Waller yield to time;
Nor pensive Cowley's moral lay.

POPE seems to speak of Spencer with particular complacency. How much this author was his favourite, will appear from what he said to Mr. Spence; from whose anecdotes this passage is transcribed:—"There is something in Spencer that pleases one as strongly in one's old-age, as it did in one's youth; I read the *Fairy Queen* when I was about *twelve*, with a vast deal of delight; and I think it gave me as much, when I read it over about a year or two ago."

458 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

OUT of the fourth and following stanza, misled by his love of antithesis, he has formed a trifling epigram.

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi; sed omnes illacrymalibes
Urgentur ignotique longâ
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.

Vain was the Chief's, the Sage's pride !
They had no Poet, and they died.
In vain they schem'd, in vain they bled !
They had no Poet, and are dead !

But he has made ample amends, by the epistle addressed to the Earl of Oxford, when he presented to that nobleman the poems of his old friend Parnelle* ; in which epistle there is a weight of sentiment, and majesty of diction, which our author has no where

* He was a writer that improved gradually. Very wide is the difference betwixt his poems on the *Peace*, and on *Unnatural Flights* in Poetry, and his *Hymn* to Contentment, his *Fairy Tale*, his *Rise* of Woman, his *Night-piece* on Death, and his *Hermite*. All five of them delicious morsels.

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 459

surpassed. His * genius seems to have been invigorated and exalted by the high opinion he had justly conceived of the person to whom he was writing; who must be confessed, now that party-prejudices † are worn away, to have had great genius, learning, and honesty. Strength of mind appears to have been his predominant characteristic; of which he gave the most striking proofs, when he was *stabbed, displaced, imprisoned*. These circumstances are alluded to in those noble and nervous verses;

And sure, if aught below the seats divine,
Can touch immortals, 'tis a soul like thine!

* I am well informed that Lord Bolingbroke was greatly mortified at Pope's bestowing such praises on his old antagonist, whom he mortally hated. Yet I have seen two original letters of Lord Bolingbroke to Lord Orford, full of the most fulsome flattery, and profane applications of scripture.

† At the time when the Secret Committee was held to examine the conduct of the Earl of Orford, who was the person that impeached the Earl of Oxford, Mr. Harley made an admirable speech in the House of Commons, declaring, that he would not treat Walpole, as he had treated his relation; and immediately left the House without giving his vote against him. Sir Robert Walpole seemed much affected with this generous behaviour of Mr. Harley.

460 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

A soul supreme in each hard instance try'd,
Above all pain, all passion, and all pride;
The rage of pow'r, the blast of public breath,
The lust of lucre, and the dread of death.

And of which fortitude and firmness another striking proof still remains, in a letter which the Earl wrote from the Tower to a friend who advised him to meditate an escape, and which is worthy of the greatest hero of antiquity. This extraordinary letter I had the pleasure of reading, by the favour of his excellent grand-daughter, the present Dutchess Dowager of Portland, who inherits that love of literature and science, so peculiar to her ancestors and family.

JERVAS owed much more of his reputation to the epistle POPE sent to him, with Dryden's translation of *Fresnoy**, than to his

* This didactic poem of Fresnoy, is but a cold, uninteresting, unpoetical, performance. He was the intimate of *Mignard*, the rival of *Le Brun*. At the end of the life of *Mignard*, are three dialogues on painting, written by *Fenelon*, in a most exquisite taste, and which are here mentioned because

his skill as a painter. He was defective, says Mr. Walpole, in drawing, colouring, and composition; and even in that most necessary, and perhaps most easy talent of a portrait-painter, likeness. In general, his pictures are a light flimsy kind of fan-painting, as large as the life. His vanity was excessive. The reason why Lady *Bridgewater's* name is so frequently repeated in this epistle, is, because he affected to be violently in love with her. Yet his * vanity was greater than his passion. One day, as she was sitting to him, he ran over the beauties of her face with rapture; but, said he, I cannot help telling your ladyship that you have not a handsome ear. "No! said Lady

cause they are little known, and not inserted in the works of *Fenelon*, and are worthy to be read even after the admirable tenth chapter of the twelfth book of *Quintilian*.

* He translated *Don Quixote*, without understanding Spanish, as his friend Pope used to say. Warburton added a supplement to the preface of this translation, concerning the origin and nature of romances of chivalry; which supplement Pope extols, in his *Letters*, vol. ix. p. 352, in the highest terms; but the opinions in it are thoroughly confuted by Mr. *Tyrowbiat*, in vol. xi. of *Supplemental Observations on Shakespeare*, p. 373.

Bridgewater;

462 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Bridgewater; pray Mr. Jervas, what is a handsome ear? He turned aside his cap and shewed her his own." *Anecdotes of Painting*, vol. iv. p. 18.

As our author was addressing his master in this his favourite and delightful art, there is a warmth and glow of expression throughout this epistle.

Together o'er the Alps methinks we fly,
Fir'd, with ideas of fair *Italy*;
With thee, on *Raphaël's* * monument I mourn,
Or wait inspiring dreams at *Maro's* urn;

* In a curious and unpublished letter of *Raffaële* to his uncle, he tells him, that his personal estate in Rome amounted to 3000 ducats of gold that is, 862l. 10s. sterling; that he has 50 crowns of gold per ann. as architect of St. Peter's, that is, 14l. 7s. 6d.; and a yearly pension for life of 300 ducats of gold, that is, 86l. 5s.; that he is in *Bramante's* place; that the church of St. Peter's would cost more than a million of gold, 287,500l.; that the Pope had appropriated for it 60,000 ducats a year, that is, 17,250l. I will add to these anecdotes, taken from *Richardson*, that *Raffaële* with great modesty consulted his friend *Ariosto*, who was an excellent scholar, on the characters, lives, and countries, of the persons whom he was to introduce in the picture of Theology. All that *Raffaële* is ever known to have written, is four letters, and a sonnet addressed to *Ariosto*. *Michael Angelo* also wrote verses, and addressed a sonnet to *Vasari*.

With

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 463

With thee repose where *Tully* once was laid,
Or seek some ruin's formidable shade!

Though the last line, by the way, is inferior to the rest, because it passes from *particular* images to something *general*. Yet however elegant and finished this epistle must be allowed to be, it does not excel that of *Dryden*, addressed to Sir Godfrey Kneller*, and the following lines, both in point of science and taste, may be compared to any of Pope's;

Thence rose the Roman, and the Lombard line:

One colour'd best, and one did best design.

Raphael's, like Homer's, was the nobler part,

But Titian's painting look'd like Virgil's art.

Thy genius gives thee both; where true design,

Postures unforc'd, and lively colours join.

Likeness is ever there; but still the best,

Like proper thoughts in lofty language dress:

* To make an experiment what gross flattery Sir Godfrey was capable of swallowing, Pope one day said to him, "God, we are told, made man in his *own* image; if this figure of *your's* had existed, man would have been made *by it*." Par D. je le crois aussi, Monsr. Pope, replied Kneller.

Where

464 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Where light, to shades descending, plays, not
strives,

Dies by degrees, and by degrees revives.

Of various parts a perfect whole is wrought :

Thy pictures think, and we divine their thought.

ONE cannot forbear reflecting on the great progress the art of painting has * made in this country, since the time that Jervas was thought worthy of this panegyric: a progress, that, we trust, will daily encrease, if due attention be paid to the incomparable discourses that have been delivered at the Royal Academy: which discourses contain more solid instruction on that subject than, I verily think, can be found in any language. The precepts are philosophically founded on truth and nature, and illustrated with the most proper and pertinent examples. The characters are drawn with a *precision* and *distinctness*, that we look for in vain in *Felbien*, *De Piles*, and even *Vasari*, or *Pliny*

* See Mr. Hayley's fine epistle to Mr. Romney.

himself.

himself. Nothing, for example, can be more just and elegant, as well as profound and scientific, than the comparison betwixt *Michael Angelo* and *Raffaële*, page 169 of these Discourses. *Michael Angelo* is plainly the hero of Sir *Joshua Reynolds*, for the same reasons that *Homer*, by every great mind, is preferred to *Virgil*.

THE epistle to Miss Blount, accompanied with the works of *Voiture* *, is full of gaiety and gallantry. Our author's attachment

* Some curious particulars in the life of *Voiture* are mentioned in vol. ii. p. 409, of the entertaining Miscellanies of *Vignoul MARVILLE*. An elegant epitaph, to which Pope alludes, was made on him, copied from *Martial*, and worth perusal:

*Etruscæ Veneres, Camænæ Iberæ ;
Hermes Gallicus, & Latina Siren ;
Risus, Deliciæ, & Dicacitates,
Lusus, Ingenium, Joci, Lepores,
Et quicquid fuit elegantiarum,
Quo Vesturius hoc jacent sepulcro,*

Cornille was invited to read his *Polyeucte*, at the hotel de *Rambouillet*; where the principal wits of the time usually assembled, and where *Voiture* presided. It was very coldly received; and in a few days, *Voiture* came to *Cornille*, and

ment to this lady, ended but with his life. Her affectation and ill-temper gave him, however, many hours of uneasiness and disquiet. When she visited him in his very last illness, and her company seemed to give him fresh spirits, the antiquated prude could not be prevailed on to stay and pass the night at Twickenham, because of *her reputation*. She occasioned an unhappy breach betwixt him and his old friend *Allen*. The works of *Voiture*, on which much of this epistle turns, after having been idolized in France, are now sunk into neglect and oblivion. The characteristic difference betwixt *Voiture* and *Balsac**, is well expressed by *Boileau*, in two letters written under their names, from the Elysian fields, to the *Duc de Vivonne*, in p. 155 of

in gentle terms told him, it was the opinion of his friends that the piece would not succeed. Such ill judges were then the most fashionable wits of France.

* *Descartes*, who, as well as *Leibnitz*, was an elegant scholar, wrote a judicious censure of *Balsac*, in admirable Latin. *Balsac* was, however, much superior to *Voiture*. But he was affectedly turgid, pompous, and bloated on all subjects, and on all occasions alike. Yet was he the first that gave form and harmony to the French prose.

vol. iii. of his works. And *Boileau*, speaking often of absurd readers and critics, loved to relate, that one of his relations, to whom he had presented his works, said to him; "Pray, Cousin, how came you to insert any other person's writings among your own? I find in your works two letters, one from *Balsac*, and the other from *Voiture*." In the other epistle to the same person, the calamitous state of an unfortunate lady, banished from town to

Old-fashion'd halls, dull aunts, and croaking rooks;
and the coarse compliments of a rural
squire,

Who with his hound comes hollowing from the
stable,

are painted with humour.

THE *Town Eclogue* was written in concert with Lady Wortley Montague, who published five more of this sort. Gay wrote a *Quaker's* eclogue, and *Swift* a Footman's
3 O 2 eclogue;

468 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

eclogue; and said to Pope, I think the *pastoral* ridicule is not exhausted: what think you of a Newgate pastoral, among the whores and thieves there? When Lady M. W. Montague would sometimes shew a copy of her verses to Pope, and he would make some little alterations, "No," said she, "Pope; no touching; for then, whatever is good for any thing will pass for yours, and the rest for mine."

NEXT follows a close translation of a fable from *Boileau*; which fable *Boileau* removed from the end of his *Épistle* to the King, as unsuited to the subject, and finished with it an epistle to L'Abbé des Roches, tom. i. p. 285. It will be no unuseful or perhaps unpleasing amusement to compare these two pieces. And I will not think of making any apology for so frequently quoting a writer so pure, sensible, and classical, as *Boileau*.

Once

Once (says an author, where I need not say)
Two trav'lers found an oyster in their way ;*
Both fierce, both hungry ; the dispute grew strong,
While, scale in hand, dame Justice past along,
Before her each with clamour pleads the laws,
Explain'd the matter, and would win the cause.
Dame Justice, weighing long the doubtful right,
Takes, opens, swallows it, before their sight.
The cause of strife remov'd so rarely well,
There take (says Justice) take ye each a shell.
We thrive at Westminster on fools like you !
'Twas a fat oyster—live in peace.—Adieu.

Un jour, dit un Auteur, n'importe en quel chapitre,
Deux voyageurs à jeun rencontrèrent une huître,
Tous deux la contestoient, lorsque dans leur chemin,
La Justice passa, la balance à la main,
Devant elle à grand bruit ils expliquent la chose.
Tous deux avec depens veulent gagner leur cause.

* I cannot forbear mentioning a work, not so well known as it deserves to be, the Latin Fables of J. Desbillons, a Jesuit, printed at Manheim, 8vo. 1768. in a most chaste and unaffected style. To speak in his own words ;

Me Fabularum suavis indoles capit,
Capit venusta munditiæ latinitas
Simplex, & arti prænitens facilis color
Laboriosæ ———

The fables in your *Esop*, said Pope to Vanbrugh, have the very spirit of *La Fontaine*. It may be so, replied Vanbrugh ; but I protest to you I never have read *La Fontaine's* Fables.

La

470 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

La Justice pesant ce droit litigieux,
 Demande l'huître, l'ouvre, & l'avale à leur yeux,
 Et par ce bel arrest terminant la bataille :
 Tenez voilà, dit elle, à chacun une écaille.
 Des sottises d'autrui, nous vivons au Palais ;
 Messieurs, l'huître étoit bonne. Adieu. Vivez en
 paix.

WE will pass over the next ten little pieces, stopping only to commend the verses on the Grotto, and the lines addressed to *Southerne*, when he was eighty years old. In the former, is a passage of a striking and awakening solemnity.

Approach ! great Nature, studiously behold
 And eye the mine, without a wish for gold !
 Approach, but awful ! Lo, th' Ægerian grot,
 Where nobly pensive *St. John* sate and thought ;
 Where British sighs from dying *Wyndham* * stole,
 And the bright flame was shot thro' *Marchmont's* soul.

* Who was one of the most able and eloquent of that respectable body of patriots, that leagued together against Sir Robert Walpole. Indeed almost all the men of wit and genius in the kingdom opposed this minister, who in vain paid the enormous sum of above fifty thousand pounds, to paltry scribblers in his defence.

In

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 271

In the latter, the venerable father of *Isabella* and *Imoinda*, is said to have raised by his eminence,

The price of prologues and of plays,

For Southerne was the first author that had two benefit-nights, the third and sixth, at the exhibition of his comedy, entitled, *Sir Anthony Love*, 1691. By the custom, which had something illiberal in it, and was first dropt by *Addison*, of distributing tickets, Southerne gained 700l. for one play. In the year 1722, he received of a bookseller 120l. for copy-money; when, the year before, Dr. Young could get no more than fifty pounds. But to drive a bargain, was not the talent of this generous and disinterested man.

THE fifteen *Epitaphs*, which conclude our author's poetical works, do not seem to merit a particular discussion. The three best are that on Mrs. *Corbett*, *Fenton*, and the

472 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

the Duke of *Buckingham*. They are all in general over-run with point and antithesis, and are a kind of panegyrical epigrams. They are, consequently, very different from the *simple sepulchral* inscriptions of the ancients, of which that of *Meleager* on his wife, in the Greek Anthology, is a model and master-piece. And in which taste a living author, that must be nameless, has written the following hendecasyllables ;

O dulcis puer, O venuste Marce,
 O multi puer et meri leporis,
 Festivi puer ingeni, valetō!
 Ergo cum, virideis vicens per annos,
 Aevi ver ageres novum tenelli,
 Vidisti Stygiās peremptus undas?
 Tuum, moestus avus, tuum propinqui
 Os plenum lepida loquacitate,
 Et risus facileis tuos requirunt.
 Te lusus, puer, in suos suetos
 Aequales vocitant tui frequenter.
 At surdus recubas, trahisque somnos
 Cunctis denique, Marce, dormiundas,

As it was the professed intention of these papers to consider POPE *as a poet*, the observations on his * *prose-works*, will not be long.

THE rich vein of humour that runs through the Memoirs of *Scriblerus*, is heightened by the variety of learning they contain; and it may be worth observing, that the chief of those who have excelled in works of wit and humour, have been men of extensive *learning*. We may instance in *Lucian*, *Cervantes*, *Quevedo*, *Rabelais*, and *Butler*; for no work in our language contains more *learning* than *Hudibras*. This life of the solemn and absurd pedant, Dr. *Scriblerus*, is the only imitation we have of the *serious* manner of *Cervantes* †; for it is not easy to say,

* The style of which is certainly not so melodious and valuable as that of Dryden's enchanting prose.

† Don Quixote is the most original and unrivalled work of modern times. The great art of Cervantes consists in having painted his mad hero with such a quantity of amiable qualities,

474 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

say, why Fielding should call his *Joseph Andrews*, excellent as it is, an imitation of *this* manner. Arbuthnot, whose humour was exquisite, had a very large share in these Memoirs; and I should guess that the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, tenth, and twelfth chapters are by his hand; as they contain allusions to parts of learning and science, with which POPE was little acquainted.

THERE are few of the many faults and absurdities, of which modern writers are guilty, but what are well exposed in the *Bathos*; particularly in chapters eleventh and twelfth; and in the Project for advancement of the Stage, in c. 16. It is rather singular, that some of the most useful criticism in our language, should be delivered in two *ludicrous* pieces; the *Rehearsal* and the *Bathos*.

qualities, as to make it impossible for us totally to despise him. This light and shade in drawing characters, shews the master. It is thus Addison has represented his Sir Roger, and Shakespeare his Falstaff.

THE

THE familiar, *gossiping*, style of *Burnet* in his history, is ridiculed in the Memoirs of a Parish Clerk. The Discourse on the office and creation of the Poet *Laureat*, might be much enriched by the curious particulars, which our author's own translator, the ingenious Abbé *Du Resnel*, has given us in the 15th vol. of the Memoirs of Literature, in his learned researches on poets *Laureat*. The eight papers in the *Guardian* are elegantly written, particularly number 61, on cruelty to animals, and number 91, on a club of little men.

THE *Preface* to his translation of the *Iliad*, is a declamatory piece of criticism, in the way of Longinus; it is written with force and spirit, but deals too much in *generals*. The most exceptionable passage in it, is where he compares the different great Epic poets to different sorts of *fire*. The *Postscript* to the *Odyssy* is better written, and more instructive. So also is the *Preface* to

476 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

his Shakespeare; though it appears, by what later authors and editors have done, that he was not sufficiently acquainted with the history of our poetry, nor with the works of Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries. The *Letters* to various friends, occupy three volumes in that* collection of his works, which we professedly made use of in drawing up these remarks. They appear to have been written with a design to have them one day published. They contain, it must be allowed, many interesting particulars; but they are tinctured and blemished with a great share of vanity, and self-importance, and with too many commendations of his own integrity, independency, and virtue. Pope, Swift, and Bolingbroke, appear by the letters, to have formed a

* His translation of Homer is therefore not here included; the discussion of whose beauties and faults (for faults it has) well deserve a separate volume; a work, which if well executed, would be of the greatest utility in forming a just taste, by shewing readers, especially of the younger sort, how very inferior and unlike it is to the original, and how much overloaded with improper and unnecessary ornaments.

kind

kind of haughty *triumvirate*, in order to issue forth *proscriptions* against all who would not adopt their sentiments and opinions. And by their *own account* of *themselves*, they would have the reader believe that they had engrossed and monopolized all the genius, and all the honesty of the age, in which, according to their opinion, they had the *misfortune* to live.

THUS have we endeavoured to give a critical account, with freedom, but it is hoped with impartiality, of each of POPE's works; by which review it will appear, that the *largest* portion of them is of the *didactic*, *moral*, and *satyric* kind; and consequently, not of the most *poetic* species of *poetry*; whence it is manifest, that *good sense* and *judgment* were his characteristical excellencies, rather than *fancy* and *invention*; not that the author of the *Rape of the Lock*, and *Eloisa*, can be thought to want *imagination*, but because his *imagination* was not his predominant talent,

478 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

talent, because he indulged it not, and because he gave not so many proofs of *this* talent as of the *other*. This turn of mind led him to admire French models; he studied *Boileau* attentively; formed himself upon *him*, as *Milton* formed himself upon the Grecian and Italian sons of *Fancy*. He gradually became one of the most correct, even, and exact poets that ever wrote; polishing his pieces with a care and assiduity, that no business or avocation ever interrupted: so that if he does not frequently ravish and transport his reader, yet he does not disgust him with unexpected inequalities, and absurd improprieties. Whatever poetical enthusiasm he actually possessed, he withheld and stifled. The perusal of him affects not our minds with such strong emotions as we feel from *Homer* and *Milton*; so that no man of a true poetical spirit, is *master of himself while he reads* them. Hence, he is a writer fit for universal perusal; adapted to all ages and stations; for the old and for the young; the
man

man of business and the scholar. He who would think *Palamon* and *Arcite*, the *Tempest* or *Comus*, childish and romantic, might relish POPE. Surely it is no narrow and niggardly encomium to say he is the great Poet of Reason, the *First* of *Ethical* authors in verse. And this species of writing is, after all, the surest road to an extensive reputation. It lies more level to the general capacities of men, than the higher flights of more genuine poetry. We all remember when even a *Churchill* was more in vogue than a *Gray*. He that treats of fashionable follies, and the topics of the day, that describes present persons and recent events, finds many readers, whose understandings and whose passions he gratifies. The name of *Chesterfield* on one hand, and of *Walpole* on the other, failed not to make a poem bought up and talked of. And it cannot be doubted, that the Odes of Horace which celebrated, and the satires which ridiculed, well-known

480 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

known and real characters at Rome, were more eagerly read, and more frequently cited, than the *Æneid* and the *Georgic* of Virgil.

Where then, according to the question proposed at the *beginning of this Essay*, shall we with justice be authorized to place our admired POPE? Not, assuredly, in the same rank with *Spencer*, *Shakespeare*, and *Milton*; however justly we may applaud the *Eloisa* and *Rape of the Lock*; but, considering the correctness, elegance, and utility of his works, the weight of sentiment, and the knowledge of man they contain, we may venture to assign him a place, *next to Milton*, and *just above Dryden*. Yet, to bring our minds steadily to make this decision, we must forget, for a moment, the divine *Musick Ode* of *Dryden*; and may perhaps then be compelled to confess, that though *Dryden* be the greater genius, yet *Pope* is the better artist.

THE preference here given to POPE, above other modern English poets, it must be remembered, is founded on the excellencies of his works *in general*, and *taken all together*; for there are *parts* and *passages* in other modern authors, in *Young* and in *Thomson*, for instance, equal to any of POPE; and he has written nothing in a strain so truly sublime, as the *Bard of Gray*.

APPENDIX N^o I.

THE ALMA of Prior, page 183. This is not the only composition of Prior, in which he has displayed a knowledge of the world, and of human nature. For I have lately been permitted to read a curious manuscript, now in the hands of her Grace the Duchess Dowager of Portland, containing Essays and Dialogues of the Dead, on the following subjects, by Prior.

1. HEADS for a Treatise on Learning. 2. Essay on Opinion. 3. A Dialogue betwixt Charles the Fifth and Clenard the Grammarian. 4. Betwixt Locke and Montaigne. 5. The Vicar of Bray and Sir Thomas More. 6. Oliver Cromwell and his Porter. If these pieces were published, Prior would appear to be as good a prose-writer as poet. It seems to be growing a little fashionable to decry his great merits as a poet. They who do this, seem not sufficiently to have attended to his admirable Ode to Mr. Charles Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax; his Ode to the Queen, 1706; his Epistle and Ode to Boileau; most of his Tales, the Alma here mentioned, the Henry and Emma (in which surely

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 483

are many strokes of true tenderness and pathos) and his Solomon: A poem, which however faulty in its plan, has very many noble and finished passages: and which has been so elegantly and classically translated by Dobson, as to reflect honour on the college of Winchester, where he was educated, and where he translated the first book as a school-exercise. I once heard him lament, that he had not, at that time, read Lucretius, which would have given a richness, and variety, and force to his verses; the only fault of which, seems to be a monotony, and want of different pauses, occasioned by translating a poem in rhyme, which he avoided in his Milton.

The political conduct of Prior was blamed on account of the part he took in the famous Partition-treaty; but in some valuable *Memoirs* of his life, written by the Hon. Mr. Montague, his friend, which are also in the possession of the Duchess Dowager of Portland, this conduct is clearly accounted for, and amply defended. In those *Memoirs* are many curious and interesting particulars of the history of that time,

A P P E N D I X N° II.

THE following is a summary of the arguments of each *Scene* and *Act*, in L'ADAMO of G. B. ANDREINI, mentioned above, page 242.

3 Q 2

ATTO

A T T O P R I M O.

SCENA 1. Iddio di creta forma Adamo, quale incontinentemente forzasi di lodarlo ma divinamente addormentatosi, mentre in estasi scorge altissimi misteri della santissima Trinità, & Incarnazione del verbo eterno: dalla costa di lui ne viene formata Eva: la quale egli, dopò svegliato, caramente abbraccia, & accetta per compagna onde benedetti da Dio, e fecondati, acciò riempissero il mondo d'huomini, riceuono il precetto di non mangiare del albero, che suola il bene, & il male, e cominciano à contemplare la bellezza delle creature.

SCENA 2. Lucifero uscito dall' Abisso contempla il Paradiso terrestre, biasmando tutte l'opre di Dio.

SCENA 3. Lucifero esorta Sathan e Belzebu à forzarli di far peccare Adamo, acciò macchiato di peccato, sia in odio à Dio, e non s'incarni il Verbo Eterno.

SCENA 4. Lucifero manda Melecano, e Lurcone à tentar Eva, quelli di Superbia, & questi d'Invidia, acciò si dolga di Dio, perche non l'habbi creata prima di Adamo.

SCENA 5. Si mandano Ruspicano, & Arfarat, à tentarla d'Ira, & di Avaritia,

SCENA

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 485

SCENA 6. Maltèa v'è à tentarla d'Accidia; Dulciato, di Luffuria; & Gular, di Gola,

ATTO SECONDO.

SCENA 1. Quindici angeli à gara lodono tutte l'opre divine.

SCENA 2. Adamo pone il nome à tutti gli animali, & insieme con Eva loda con molti encomii il sommo Dio.

SCENA 3. Serpe s'apparecchia per tentar Eva, e dice per qual cagione habbi preso quella forma, & non altra.

SCENA 4. Volano narra a Sathan l'infernal consiglio del modo di assaltar Eva,

SCENA 5. Vana Gloria e Serpe congiunti d'accordo entrano nel Paradiso terrestre, e si nascondono sù l'albero della scienza del bene, e del male, per tentar Eva à gustare i frutti di quello.

SCENA 6. Eva gloriandosi dei tanti favori, e gratie ricevute da Dio, rimira il Serpe sopra l'albero, e con molte ragioni da quello persuasa, prende il pomo, lo gusta, e v'è cercando Adamo, per farlo fare l'istesso.

ATTO

A T T O T E R Z O.

SCENA 1. Adamo dopo l'haver descritto leggiadramente la fonte che irrigava il Paradiso terrestre fù da Eva persuaso a gustare il pomo, e lo mangiò per non contristarla; onde ambidue conobbero d'esser nudi, soggetti a morte & a mille altri mali & si nascofero.

SCENA 2. Volano rallegrandosi d'el peccato d'Adamo, col suono di roca tromba chiama tutti gli spiriti Infernali.

SCENA 3. Sathan certificato d'ella caduta d'Adamo, efforta gli altri spiriti a far festa.

SCENA 4. Serpe con Vana Gloria tornando trionfanti d'Adamo sono da Sathan, e da gli altri spiriti perciò adorati: e da Canoro vengono cantate le lodi loro.

SCENA 5. Gli Folletti per allegrezza della caduta d'Adamo danzano insieme: ma sentendo trombe celesti e scorgendo la divina luce tutti fuggono all' abisso.

SCENA 6. Il Padre Eterno chiamando Adamo & Eva e da loro confessato l'errore, ad ambidue pubblica le pene nelle quali sono incorsi, maledice il serpente & si nasconde da loro.

SCENA

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 487

SCENA 7. L'Angelo porta due vesti di pelle ad Adamo & Eva, e da quelli partendo à volo gli lascia dolenti, a lagnarsi de gli errori loro.

SCENA 8. L'Archangelo Michaelè con spada di foco scaccia Adamo & Eva dal Paradiso, & essortando gli altri Angioli, che solevano stare con loro, ad andar seco in Cielo, fa che resti un Cherubino con la spada di foco a guardare la porta del Paradiso.

SCENA 9. Gli Angeli pria che partirsi, licentiatifi d'Adamo, l'essortano a piangere il suo errore, promettendoli allegrezza, e canto.

A T T O Q U A R T O .

SCENA 1. Volano a suono di tromba chiamando tutti gli spiriti de gli elementi, che vengano ad incontrarè Lucifero, eglino vengono tutti.

SCENA 2. Lucifero chiamati tutti gli spiriti a consiglio, dimanda a ciascuno il suo parere, si delle attioni d'Adamo, come delle Divine; ma non sapendo quelli bene interpretarle, egli loro le dichiara.

SCENA 3. Lucifero, emulo di Dio, nella creatione del mondo, da una massa di terra confusa fa uscire quattro mostri a danno dell' huomo, Mondo, Carne,

488 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

Morte, e Demonio, poi con tutti gli altri torna all' Inferno.

SCENA 4. Adamo solingo narra come gli animali, e tutte l'altre cose hanno cangiato forma, e costumi, per il suo peccato, & amaramente lo piange.

SCENA 5. Le fere seguendosi, & amazzandosi tra loro, mettono gran terrore ad Adamo & Eva che perciò si nascondono.

SCENA 6. Appariscono ad Adamo quattro mostri cioè, Fame, Sète, Fatica, e Desperatione, e la Fame gli dice, che mai questi da lui partiranno.

SCENA 7. La Morte minaccia di troncargli la vita ad Eva, & Adamo, e subito il Ciel turbato con tuoni, faette, grandini, piogge, e venti, gli spaventa.

A T T O Q U I N T O.

SCENA 1. La Carne tenta Adamo, e trouandolo ritroso, gli mostra, come tutte le cose sentono amore.

SCENA 2. Lucifero s'aggiunge, alla Carne, e tenta di persuadere Adamo a congiungersi con essa; fingendosi Adamo celeste.

SCENA

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 489

SCENA 3. Adamo con l'agiuto dell' Angelo suo custode supera la Carne & Lucifero.

SCENA 4. Il Mondo narra le sue grandezze, e ciò che faranno gli huomini per l'oro, e s'apparecchia per tentar Eva.

SCENA 5. Il Mondo propone ad Eva tutte le sue pompe, e gli fa apparire un vago, e ricco palazzo d'oro.

SCENA 6. Dal palazzo del Mondo uscito un choro di Donzelle, con molti ornamenti vogliono ornarne Eva, ma alla voce & precetto d'Adamo restano confuse, & il tutto sparisce: onde il Mondo minacciando ad Adamo, chiama contra di lui tutti gl'Infernali Mostri.

SCENA 7. Lucifero, Morte, Mondo, e chori di Diavoli, s'apparecchiano per far violenza ad Adamo, e combattere con Dio.

SCENA 8. L'Archangelo Micaele, con chori d'Angeli, combatte con Lucifero, & i chori di Demonii, & superati gli scacciano finò all' Abisso.

SCENA 9. Adamo & Eva riveriscono l'Archangelo Micaele, e da lui sono consolati & assicurati, che per la penitenza loro, an dranno a goder in cielo: on de per allegrezza gli angeli cantano lodi a Dio, della vittoria, & felicità dell' huomo, per l'immensa pietà & Amor divino.

490 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

THE lovers of *Paradise Lost* will, we trust, be entertained with having an opportunity of seeing how greatly and judiciously our sublime and divine poet has heightened and improved any the least hints or images, he has been supposed to have taken from this ancient drama, copies of which are extremely scarce and uncommon: and therefore a specimen of the versification is subjoined. Not that it can be imagined, that the copious, comprehensive, and creative mind of Milton, so rich in the stores of *nature*, could condescend to be a meer *borrower*, as Voltaire would insinuate: nor can we assent to the opinion of that critic who says, “ that the poetical fire of Milton glows like a furnace, kept up to an uncommon ardour by the force of *Art*.”

ATTO QUARTO, SCENA QUINTA.

ADAMO. Doue men fuggo ah! lassa, oue m'ascondo?
Corri ne le mie braccia,
E chi ha insieme peccato
Sia da le fere insieme sbranato.

EVA. Ahi ch' ogni scampo è fatto
Varco di morte, a chi di vita è indegno.
Pur di quell' antro in seno
Sommergiamoci Adamo.

ADAMO. Lassi partiro al fin, ma gia non partoro
Da l' Huomo le ruine, il duol mortale:

Strano

Strano caso infelice, il riso piange;
L'allegrezza sta mesta;
Hoggi la vita more.

EVA. Quanto m'affligo Adamo,
Ahi quanto piango ò Cielo;
Quanto sospiro ò Dio, quanto m'accuso,
Nè son viva; nè moro.

ADAMO. Ma quai ruggiti horrendi
L'aer fa rimbombar fremer le valli?

MORTE. Tù pur fosti; o vil Donna,
Che prima mi chiamasti
Con voce di peccato
Sin dal Tartareo oscuro.
Tù tù putrida carne, e poca terra,
Questo terribil mostro
D'ossa humane contesto
A rimirar le stelle hoggi chiamasti.
Hor, che vuoi? di? favella,
Stanca sè de la vita?
Ecco la falciatrice, ecco la falce
Che la luce à lasciar hoggi t'invita.
Gia con occhio lincèo
Scorgo mirando la futura etate
Ch'al mio nome, a quest' armi à l'empietate
Trofei s'ergon funesti.
Ma, che? non finiran qui le ruine
Chà tè minaccia il Cielo; alte sventure

492 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

T'apprest'anco l'Inferno,
Colme d'horror sì grande;
Ch'io che la Morte sono
Bramo morir, per non mirarle in volto:
Gia tu sè reo di morte,
Già tua stanza è l'Inferno,
Fatto rubello al tuo Fattor superno.

ADAMO. Ahi lagrime, ahi dolore
Ahi crudo peccatore.

EVA. Ahi dolente, infelice
Eva gran peccatrice.

ADAMO. Ahi, che s'annerà il Cielò, ahi che ne toglie
Com' indegni di luce ogni sua luce.
Ma qual tosto nel Ciel s'auuina, e more,
Fiamma, ch' abbaglia, e serpeggiando fugge
Fatta serpe di foco?

EVA. Ahi, che fin non hauran quì del Ciel l'ire
Ne conuien pria morire.

ADAMO. Deh qual rimbombo là sù in alte ascolto?
Forse con simil voce
Ne discaccia dal Mondo, il Cielo irato,
E ne condanna de l'abisso al fondo?
Quante faette, ò quante
Atterran selue, e boschi, ò quanti, ò quanti?

Venti

AND GENIUS OF POPE. 493

Venti fremon per l'aria ;
Quanto scende dal Cielo
Humor converso in grosse palle, in gielo.

EVA. Lassi noi, che da l'alto
Diluviano tant'acque,
Che trabboccano i riu,
E'n superbiti i fiumi
Van le belue fugando,
E di boschi, e di selue
Gli humidi pesci habitator si fanno.

ADAMO. Fuggiamo, ohimè fuggiamo
Dé monti à quelle cime
Où il Ciel sembra c'hoggi
Dal lungo fulminar stanco s'appoggi.

The names of the persons represented, are as follows :

INTERLOCUTORI.

PADRE ETERNO.

CHORO di SERAFINI, CHERUBINI, & ANGELI.

ARCANGELO MICAELE.

ADAMO.

EVA.

CHERUBINO custode d'ADAMO.

LUCIFERO.

SATHAN.

BEELZEBU.

494 ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS

BELZEBU.

GLI SETTE PECCATI MORTALI.

MONDO.

CARNE.

FAME.

FATICA.

DISPERAZIONE.

MORTE.

VANAGLORIA.

SERPE.

VOLANO, messaggiero infernale.

CHORO di FOLETTI.

CHORO di SPIRITI IGNEI, AEREI, ACQUATICI,
& INFERNALI.

Since page 6 was written, it has been clearly proved, that the Palamon and Arcite of Chaucer, is taken from the *Thestida* of Boccace; a poem which has been, till within a few years past, strangely neglected and unknown; and of which Mr. Tyrwhitt has given a curious and exact summary, in his dis. on the Canterbury Tales, vol. iv. p. 135. I cannot forbear expressing my surprise, that the circumstance of Chaucer's borrowing this tale should have remained so long unknown; when it is so plainly and positively mentioned in a book so very common as the *Memoirs of Nicéron*; who says, t. 33. p. 44, after giving an abstract of the story of Palamon and Arcite, *G. Chaucer, l'Homere de son pays, a mis l'ouvrage de Boccace en vers Anglois.* This book was published, 1736. He also mentions a French translation of the *Thestida*, published at Paris M.D.CC. 1597, in 12mo. The late Mr. Stanley, who was as accurately skilled in modern as in an-

cient Greek; for a long time was of opinion, that this poem, in modern political Greek verses, was the original; in which opinion he was confirmed by the Abbé Barthelemy, at Paris, whose learned correspondence with Mr. Stanley on this subject I have read. At last he candidly gave up this opinion, and was convinced that Boccace invented the tale. *Crescembini* and *Muratori* have mentioned the *Theseida* more than once. That very laborious and learned antiquary *Apostolo Zeno*, speaks thus of it, in his notes to the *Bibliotheca of Fontanini*, p. 450. t. i. Questa opera pastorale (that is, the *Ameto*) che prende il nome dal pastore Ameto, ha data l'origine all' *Egloga* Italiana, non senza lode del Boccaccio, cui pure la nostra lingua dà il ritrovamento della ottava rima (which was first used in the *Theseida*) e del poema eroico. *Gravina* does not mention this poem. *Crescembini* gives this opinion of it, p. 118, t. i. Nel medesimo secolo del Petrarca, il Boccaccio diede principio all' *Epica*, colla sua *Teseide*, e col *Filostrato*; ma nello stile non eccedè la mediocrità, anzi sovente cadde nell' umile. I must except out of the number of French writers, mentioned at the bottom of this page, William of Lorris, author of that beautiful old poem, *Le Roman de la Rose*, who, *Fanchet* says, died 1260. The fashion that has lately obtained, in all the nations of Europe, of republishing and illustrating their old poets, does honour to the good taste and liberal curiosity of the present age. It is always pleasing, and indeed useful, to look back to the rude beginnings of any art, brought to a greater degree of elegance and grace.

Aurea nunc, olim sylvestribus horrida dumis. VIRG.

F I N I S.



ERRATA.

Page 5. line 16. for *this* read *bis*.

6. l. 17. after *Chaucer*, add except *William de Loris*.

19. l. 4. for *arms* read *limbs*.

28. l. 10. for *resource* read *source*.

33. l. 19. for *history and painting* read *history-painting*.

36. dele the whole note at the bottom.

38. l. 7. for *andanto* read *andato*. Line 12. per aver.

42. for *κατασκευαει* read *κατασκευαος*.

l. 10. for *on the Druids* read *bis other ode*.

54. l. 11. for *height* read *front*.

59. l. 14. for *bold of* read *belong to*.

94. l. 11. for *have* read *has*.

113. l. 9. for *nous* read *leurs*.

120. l. 13. for *bad* read *has*.

130. l. 13. for *distrust* read *disturb*.

138. l. 3. for *αγαπαιον* read *αγαπαια*, and for *αγαος* read *αγαος*.

140. l. 18. after *of gratitude*, read *of gratitude*.

141. l. 12. for *εισου* read *εισου*.

146. l. 18. for *bad* read *has*.

149. l. 17. for *our* read *own*.

180. note. for 1747 read 1742.

184. l. 12. for *lettered* read *unlettered*.

187. l. 1. for *evening* read *eve*.

191. l. 5. for *boneur* read *bonneur*.

195. l. 16. for *RIGHT* read *EIGHT*.

431. note. for *are found* read *is found*.

459. note. l. 4. for *Orford* read *Oxford*.

473. note. for *quantity* read *number*.

